THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
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ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR, THE

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BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

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ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

CHAP. I.

I PASSED along the lane I have described, without perceiving or being observed by a human being. The doors were shut, the window-shutters closed, and all was still as night. I reached the extremity of the lane unmolested. My pursuers, if they immediately followed, would know that the likelihood was small, of my having, in the interval, found shelter

in this place; and would proceed without hesitation, as I on my part was obliged to do, from the end nearest to the prison to its furthest termination.

The face of the country, in the spot to which I had thus opened myself a passage, was rude and uncultivated. It was overgrown with brushwood and furze; the soil was for the most part of a loose sand; and the surface extremely irregular. I climbed a small eminence, and could perceive, not very remote in the distance, a few cottages thinly scattered. This prospect did not altogether please me; I conceived that my safety would, for the present, be extremely assisted, by keeping myself from the view of any human being.

I therefore came down again into the valley, and upon a careful examination perceived that it was interspersed with cavities, some deeper than others, but all of them so shallow, as neither to be ca-

pable of hiding a man, nor of exciting suspicion as places of possible concealment. Meanwhile the day had but just begun to dawn; the morning was lowering and drizzly; and, though the depth of these caverns was of course well known to the neighbouring inhabitants, the shadows they cast were so black and impenetrable, as might well have produced wider expectations in the mind of a stranger. Poor therefore as was the protection they were able to afford, I thought it right to have recourse to it for the moment, as the best the emergency would supply. It was for my life; and, the greater was the jeopardy to which it was exposed, the more dear did that life seem to become to my affections. The recess I chose as most secure, was within little more than a hundred yards of the end of the lane, and the extreme buildings of the town.

I had not stood up in this manner two

minutes, before I heard the sound of feet, and presently saw the ordinary turnkey and another pass the place of my retreat. They were so close to me that, if I had stretched out my hand, I believe I could have caught hold of their clothes, without so much as changing my posture. As no part of the overhanging earth intervened between me and them, I could see them entire, though the deepness of the shade rendered me almost completely invisible. I heard them say to each other, in tones of vehement asperity, Curse the rascal! which way can he be gone? The reply was, Damn him! I wish we had him but safe once again! Never fear! rejoined the first, he cannot have above half a mile the start of us. They were presently out of hearing; for, as to sight, I dared not advance my body, so much as an inch, to look after them, lest I should be discovered by my pursuers in some other direction. From

the very short time that elapsed, between my escape and the appearance of these men, I concluded that they had made their way through the same outlet as I had done, it being impossible that they could have had time to come, from the gate of the prison, and so round a considerable part of the town, as they must otherwise have done.

I was so alarmed at this instance of diligence on the part of the enemy, that, for some time, I scarcely ventured to proceed an inch from my place of concealment, or almost to change my posture. The morning, which had been bleak and drizzly, was succeeded by a day of heavy and incessant rain; and the gloomy state of the air and surrounding objects, together with the extreme nearness of my prison, and a total want of food, caused me to pass the hours in no very agreeable sensations. This inclemency of the weather however, which generated a feel-

ing of stillness and solitude, encouraged me by degrees to change my retreat, for another of the same nature, but of somewhat greater security. I hovered with little variation about a single spot, as long as the sun continued above the horizon.

Towards evening, the clouds began to disperse, and the moon shone, as on the preceding night, in full brightness. I had perceived no human creature during the whole day, except in the instance already mentioned. This had perhaps been owing to the nature of the day; at all events I considered it as too hazardous an experiment, to venture from my hiding-place in so clear and fine a night. I was therefore obliged to wait for the setting of this luminary, which was not till near five o'clock in the morning. My only relief during this interval, was to allow myself to sink to the bottom of my cavern, it being scarcely possible for me to continue any longer on my

feet. Here I fell into an interrupted and unrefreshing doze, the consequence of a laborious night, and a tedious, melancholy day; though I rather sought to avoid sleep, which, co-operating with the coldness of the season, would tend more to injury than advantage.

The period of darkness, which I had determined to use for the purpose of removing to a greater distance from my prison, was, in its whole duration, something less than three hours. When I rose from my seat, I was weak with hunger and fatigue, and, which was worse, I seemed, between the dampness of the preceding day, and the sharp, clear frost of the night, to have lost the command of my limbs. I stood up and shook myself; I leaned against the side of the hill, impelling in different directions the muscles of the extremities; and at length recovered in some degree the sense of feeling. This operation was attended with

an incredible aching pain, and required no common share of resolution to encounter and prosecute it. Having quitted my retreat, I at first advanced with weak and tottering steps; but, as I proceeded, increased my pace. The barren heath, which reached to the edge of the town, was, at least on this side, without a path; but the stars shone, and, guiding myself by them, I determined to steer as far as possible from the hateful scene where I had been so long confined. The line I pursued was of irregular surface, sometimes obliging me to climb a steep ascent, and at others to go down into a dark and impenetrable dell. I was often compelled, by the dangerousness of the way, to deviate considerably from the direction I wished to pursue. In the mean time I advanced with as much rapidity, as these and similar obstacles would permit me to do. The swiftness of the motion, and the thinness of the air, restored to me

my alacrity. I forgot the inconveniences under which I laboured, and my mind became lively, spirited and enthusiastic.

I had now reached the border of the heath, and entered upon what is usually termed the forest. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that, in this conjuncture, exhausted with hunger, destitute of all provision for the future, and surrounded with the most alarming dangers, my mind suddenly became glowing, animated and cheerful. I thought that, by this time, the most formidable difficulties of my undertaking were surmounted; and I could not believe that, after having effected so much, I should find any thing invincible in what remained to be done. I recollected the confinement I had undergone, and the fate that had impended over me, with horror. Never did man feel more vividly, than I felt at that moment, the sweets of liberty. Never did man more strenuously prefer

poverty with independence, to the artificial allurements of a life of slavery. I stretched forth my arms with rapture, I clapped my hands one upon the other, and exclaimed, Ah, this is indeed to be a man! These wrists were lately galled with fetters; all my motions, whether I rose up or sat down, were echoed to with the clanking of chains; I was tied down like a wild beast, and could not move but in a circle of a few feet in circumference. Now I can run fleet as a greyhound, and leap like a young roe upon the mountains. Oh, God! (if God there be that condescends to record the lonely beatings of an anxious heart) thou only canst tell with what delight a prisoner, just broke forth from his dungeon, hugs the blessings of new-found liberty! Sacred and indescribable moment, when man regains his rights! But lately I held my life in jeopardy, because one man was unprincipled enough to assert

what he knew to be false; I was destined to suffer an early and inexorable death from the hands of others, because none of them had penetration enough to distinguish from falshood, what I uttered with the entire conviction of a full-fraught heart! Strange, that men from age to age should consent to hold their lives at the breath of another, merely that each in his turn may have a power of acting the tyrant according to law! Oh, God! give me poverty! shower upon me all the imaginary hardships of human life! I will receive them all with thankfulness. Turn me a prey to the wild beasts of the desert, so I be never again the victim of man, dressed in the gore-dripping robes of authority! Suffer me at least to call life and the pursuits of life my own! Let me hold it at the mercy of elements, of the hunger of beasts or the revenge of barbarians, but not of the cold-blooded prudence of monopolists

and kings!——How enviable was the enthusiasm, which could thus furnish me with energy, in the midst of hunger, poverty and universal desertion!

I had now walked at least six miles. At first I carefullly avoided the habitations that lay in my way, and feared to be seen by any of the persons to whom they belonged, lest it should in any degree furnish a clue to the researches of my pursuers. As I went forward, I conceived it might be proper to relax a part of my precaution. At this time I perceived several persons coming out of a thicket close to me. I immediately considered this circumstance as rather favourable than the contrary. It was necessary for me to avoid entering any of the towns and villages in the vicinity. It was however full time that I should procure for myself some species of refreshment, and by no means improbable that these men might be in

some way assisting to me in that respect. In my situation it appeared to me indifferent what might be their employment or profession. I had little to apprehend from thieves, and I believed that they, as well as honest men, could not fail to have some compassion for a person under my circumstances. I therefore rather threw myself in their way, than avoided them.

They were thieves. One of the company cried out, Who goes there? stand! I accosted them; Gentlemen, said I, I am a poor traveller, almost—— While I spoke, they came round me, and he that had first hailed me, said, Damn me, tip us none of your palaver; we have heard that story of a poor traveller any time these five years. Come, down with your dust! let us see what you have got! Sir, I replied, I have not a shilling in the world, and am more than half starved beside. Not a shilling! answered my

assailant, what, I suppose you are as poor as a thief? But, if you have not money, you have clothes, and those you must resign.

My clothes! rejoined I with indignation, you cannot desire such a thing. Is it not enough that I am pennyless? I have been all night upon the open heath. It is now the second day that I have not eaten a morsel of bread. Would you strip me naked to the weather in the midst of this depopulated forest? No, no, you are men! The same hatred of oppression, that arms you against the insolence of wealth, will teach you to relieve those who are perishing like me. For God's sake, give me food! do not strip me of the comforts I still possess!

While I uttered this apostrophe, the unpremeditated eloquence of sentiment, I could perceive by their gestures, though the day had not yet begun to dawn, that the feelings of one or two of the com-

pany appeared to take my part. The man, who had already undertaken to be their spokesman, perceived the same thing; and, excited either by the brutality of his temper or the love of command, hastened to anticipate the disgrace of a defeat. He brushed suddenly up to me, and by main force pushed me several feet from the place where I stood. The shock I received drove me upon a second of the gang, not one of those who had listened to my expostulation; and he repeated the brutality. My indignation was strongly excited by this treatment; and, after being thrust backward and forward two or three times in this manner, I broke through my assailants, and turned round to defend myself. The first that advanced within my reach, was my original enemy. In the present moment I listened to nothing but the dictates of passion, and I laid him at his length on the earth. I was immediately

assailed with sticks and bludgeons on all sides, and presently received a blow that almost deprived me of my senses. The man I had knocked down, was now upon his feet again, and aimed a stroke at me with a cutlass as I fell, which took place in a deep wound upon my neck and shoulder. He was going to repeat his blow. The two who had seemed to waver at first in their animosity, afterwards appeared to me to join in the attack, urged either by animal sympathy, or the spirit of imitation. One of them however, as I afterwards understood, seized the arm of the man who was going to strike me a second time with his cutlass, and who would otherwise probably have put an end to my existence. I could hear the words, Damn it, enough, enough! that is too bad, Gines! How so? replied a second voice; he will but pine here upon the forest, and die by inches: it will be an act of charity to

put him out of his pain.—It will be imagined that I was not uninterested in this sort of debate. I made an effort to speak; my voice failed me. I stretched out one hand with a gesture of intreaty. You shall not strike, by God! said one of the voices; why should we be murderers?—The side of forbearance at length prevailed. They therefore contended themselves with stripping me of my coat and waistcoat, and rolling me into a dry ditch. They then left me, totally regardless of my distressed condition, and the plentiful effusion of blood which streamed from my wound.

CHAP. II.

In this woful situation, though extremely weak, I was not deprived of sense. I tore my shirt from my naked body, and endeavoured, with some success, to make of it a bandage to staunch the flowing of the blood. I then exerted myself to crawl up the side of the ditch. I had scarcely effected the latter, when, with equal surprise and joy, I perceived a man advancing at no great distance. I called for help as well as I could. The man came towards me with evident signs of compassion, and the appearance I exhibited was indeed sufficiently calculated to excite it. I had no hat. My hair was dishevelled, and the ends of the locks clotted with blood. My shirt was wrapped about my neck and shoulders, and was

plentifully stained with red. My body, which was naked to my middle, was variegated with streams of blood; nor had my lower garments, which were white, by any means escaped.

For God's sake, my poor fellow! said he, with a tone of the greatest imaginable kindness, how came you thus? And, saying this, he lifted me up, and set me on my feet. Can you stand? added he doubtfully. Oh, yes, very well, I replied. Having received this answer, he quitted me, and began to take off his own coat, that he might cover me from the cold. I had however overrated my strength, and was no sooner left to myself than I reeled, and fell almost at my length upon the ground. But I broke my fall by stretching out my sound arm, and again raised myself upon my knees. My benefactor now covered me, raised me, and, bidding me lean upon him, told me he would presently conduct me to a place

where I should be taken care of. Courage is a capricious property; and, though while I had no one to depend upon but myself, I possessed a mine of seemingly inexhaustible fortitude, yet no sooner did I find this unexpected sympathy on the part of another, than my resolution appeared to give way, and I felt ready to faint. My charitable conductor perceived this, and every now and then encouraged me, in a manner so cheerful, so good-humoured and benevolent, equally free from the torture of droning expostulation, and the weakness of indulgence, that I thought myself under the conduct of an angel rather than a man. I could perceive that his behaviour had in it nothing of boorishness, and that he was thoroughly imbued with the principles of affectionate civility.

We walked about three quarters of a mile, and that not towards the open, but the most uncouth and unfrequented part

of the forest. We crossed a place which had once been a moat, but which was now in some parts dry, and in others contained a little muddy and stagnated water. Within the inclosure of this moat, I could discover only a pile of ruins, and several walls, the upper part of which seemed to overhang their foundations, and to totter to their ruin. After having entered however with my conductor through an archway, and passed along a winding passage that was perfectly dark, we came to a stand.

At the upper end of this passage was a door, which I was unable to perceive. My conductor knocked at the door, and was answered by a voice from within, which, for body and force, might have been the voice of a man, but with a sort of female sharpness and acidity, enquiring, Who is there? Satisfaction was no sooner given in this point, than I heard two bolts pushed back, and the door un-

locked. The apartment opened, and we entered. The interior of this habitation by no means corresponded with the appearance of my protector, but on the contrary wore a face of discomfort, carelessness and dirt. The only person I saw within was a woman, rather advanced in life, and whose person had I know not what of extraordinary and loathsome. Her eyes were red and blood-shot; her hair was pendent in matted and shaggy tresses about her shoulders; her complexion swarthy, and of the consistency of parchment; her form spare, and her whole body, her arms in particular, uncommonly vigorous and muscular. Not the milk of human kindness, but the feverous blood of savage ferocity, seemed to flow from her heart; and her whole figure suggested an idea of unmitigable energy, and an appetite gorged in malevolence. This infernal Thalestris had no sooner cast her eyes upon us as we

entered, than she exclaimed in a discordant and discontented voice, What have we got here? this is not one of our people! My conductor, without answering this apostrophe, bade her push an easy chair, which stood in one corner, and set it directly before the fire. This she did with apparent reluctance, muttering, Ah, you are at your old tricks; I wonder what such folks as we have to do with charity! It will be the ruin of us at last, I can see that! Hold your tongue, beldam? said he, with a stern significance of manner, and fetch one of my best shirts, a waistcoat and some dressings. Saying this, he at the same time put into her hand a small bunch of keys. In a word, he treated me with as much kindness as if he had been my father. He examined my wound, washed and dressed it; at the same time that the old woman by his express order prepared for me such nourish-

ment, as he thought most suitable to my weak and languid condition.

These operations were no sooner completed, than my benefactor recommended to me to retire to rest, and preparations were making for that purpose, when suddenly a trampling of feet was heard, succeeded by a knock at the door. The old woman opened the door, with the same precautions as had been employed upon our arrival, and immediately six or seven persons tumultuously entered the apartment. Their appearance was different, some having the air of mere rustics, and others that of a tarnished sort of gentry. All had a feature of boldness, inquietude and disorder, extremely unlike any thing I had before observed in such a group. But my astonishment was still increased, when upon a second glance I perceived something in the general air of several of them, and of one in particular, that persuaded me they

were the gang from which I had just escaped, and this one the antagonist by whose animosity I was so near having been finally destroyed. I imagined they had entered the hovel with a hostile intention, that my benefactor was upon the point of being robbed, and I probably murdered.

This suspicion however was soon removed. They addressed my conductor with respect under the appellation of captain. They were boisterous and noisy in their remarks and exclamations, but their turbulence was tempered by a certain deference to his opinion and authority. I could observe in the person who had been my active opponent some awkwardness and irresolution as he first perceived me, which he dismissed with a sort of effort, exclaiming, Who the devil is here? There was something in the tone of this apostrophe, that roused the attention of my protector. He looked at the speaker with a fixed and pene-

trating glance, and then said, Nay, Gines, do you know? Did you ever see the person before? Curse it, Gines! interrupted a third, you are damnably out of luck. They say dead men walk, and you see there is some truth in it. Truce with your impertinence, Jeckols! replied my protector, this is no proper occasion for a joke. Answer me, Gines, were you the cause of this young man being left naked and wounded this bitter morning upon the forest?

Mayhap I was. What then?

What provocation could induce you to so cruel a treatment?

Provocation enough. He had no money.

What, did you use him thus, without so much as being irritated by any resistance on his part?

Yes, he did resist. I only hustled him, and he had the impudence to strike me.

Gines! you are an incorrigible fellow.

Pooh, what signifies what I am? You, with your compassion, and your fine feelings, will bring us all to the gallows.

I have nothing to say to you; I have no hopes of you! Comrades, it is for you to decide upon the conduct of this man, as you think proper. You know how repeated his offences have been; you know what pains I have taken to mend him. Our profession is the profession of justice. [It is thus that the prejudices of men universally teach them to colour the most desperate cause to which they have determined to adhere.] We, who are thieves without a licence, are at open war with another set of men, who are thieves according to law. With such a cause then to bear us out, shall we stain it with cruelty, malice and revenge?—A thief is, of course, a man living among his equals; I do not pretend therefore to assume any authority among you; act as you think proper;

but, so far as relates to myself, I vote that Gines be expelled from among us as a disgrace to our society.

This proposition seemed to meet the general sense. It was easy to perceive that the opinion of the rest coincided with that of their leader; notwithstanding which a few of them hesitated as to the conduct to be pursued. In the mean time Gines muttered something in a surly and irresolute way, about taking care how they provoked him. This insinuation instantly roused the courage of my protector, and his eyes flashed with contempt.

Rascal! said he, do you menace us? Do you think we will be your slaves? No, no, do your worst! Go to the next justice of the peace, and impeach us; I can easily believe you are capable of it. Sir, when we entered into this gang, we were not such fools as not to know that we entered upon a service of danger.

One of its dangers consists in the treachery of fellows like you. But we did not enter at first, to flinch now. Did you believe that we would live in hourly fear of you, tremble at your threats, and compromise, whenever you should so please, with your insolence? That would be a blessed life indeed! I would rather see my flesh torn piecemeal from my bones! Go, sir! I defy you! You dare not do it! You dare not sacrifice these gallant fellows to your rage, and publish yourself to all the world a traitor and a scoundrel! If you do, you will punish yourself, not us! Begone!

The intrepidity of the leader communicated itself to the rest of the company. Gines easily saw, that there was no hope of bringing them over to a contrary sentiment. After a short pause, he answered, I did not mean—No, damn it! I will not snivel neither. I was always true to my principles, and a friend to

you all. But, since you are resolved to turn me out, why—good bye to you!

The expulsion of this man, produced a remarkable improvement in the whole gang. Those who were before inclined to humanity, assumed new energy, in proportion as they saw such sentiments likely to prevail. They had before suffered themselves to be overborne, by the boisterous insolence of their antagonists; but now they adopted, and with success, a different conduct. Those who envied the ascendancy of their comrade, and therefore imitated his conduct, began to hesitate in their career. Stories were brought forward of the cruelty and brutality of Gines, both to men and animals, which had never before reached the ear of the leader. The stories I shall not repeat. They could excite only emotions of abhorrence and disgust, and some of them argued a mind of such a stretch of depravity, as to many readers

would appear utterly incredible. And yet this man had his virtues. He was enterprizing, persevering, and faithful.

His removal was a considerable benefit to me. It would have been no small hardship to have been turned adrift immediately under my unfavourable circumstances, with the additional disadvantage of the wound I had received; and yet I could scarcely have ventured to remain under the same roof, with a man, to whom my appearance was as a guilty conscience, perpetually reminding him of his own offence, and the counteraction of his leader. His profession accustomed him to a certain degree of indifference to consequences, and indulgence to the sallies of passion; and he might easily have found his opportunity to insult or injure me, when I should have had nothing, but my own debilitated exertions, to protect me.

Freed from this danger, I found my

situation sufficiently fortunate for a man under my circumstances. It was attended with all the advantages for concealment my fondest imagination could have hoped; and it was by no means destitute of the benefits which arise from kindness and humanity. Nothing could be more unlike, than the thieves I had seen in —— jail, and the thieves of my new residence. The latter were generally full of cheerfulness and merriment. They could expatiate freely wherever they thought proper. They could form plans and execute them. They consulted their inclinations. They did not impose upon themselves the task, as is too often the case in human society, of seeming tacitly to approve that from which they suffered most; or, which is worst, of persuading themselves that all the wrongs they suffered were right; but were at open war with their oppressors. On the contrary, the imprisoned felons I had

lately seen, were shut up like wild beasts in a cage, deprived of activity, and palsied with indolence. The occasional demonstrations that still remained of their former enterprizing life, were the starts and convulsions of disease, not the meditated and consistent exertions of a mind in health. They had no more of hope, of project, of golden and animated dreams, but were reserved to the most dismal prospects, and forbidden to think upon any other topic. It is true, that these two scenes were parts of one whole, the one the consummation, the hourly to be expected successor of the other. But the men I now saw, were wholly inattentive to this, and in that respect appeared to hold no commerce with reflection or reason.

I might in one view, as I have said, congratulate myself upon my present residence; it answered completely the purposes of concealment. It was the seat of merriment and hilarity; but the hilarity

that characterised it, produced no correspondent feelings in my bosom. The persons who composed this society, had each of them cast off all control from established principle; their trade was terror, and their constant object to elude the vigilance of the community. The influence of these circumstances, was visible in their character. I found among them benevolence and kindness; they were strongly susceptible of emotions of generosity. But, as their situation was precarious, their dispositions were proportionably fluctuating. Inured to the animosity of their species, they were irritable and passionate. Accustomed to exercise harshness towards the subject of their depredations, they did not always confine their brutality within that scope. They were habituated to consider wounds and bludgeons and stabbing, as the obvious mode of surmounting every difficulty. Uninvolved in the debilitating

routine of human affairs, they frequently displayed an energy which, from every impartial observer, would have extorted veneration. Energy is perhaps of all qualities the most valuable; and a just political system would possess the means of extracting from it, thus circumstanced, its beneficial qualities, instead of consigning it, as now, to indiscriminate destruction. We act like the chymist, who should reject the finest ore, and employ none but what was sufficiently debased to fit it immediately for the vilest uses. But the energy of these men, such as I beheld it, was in the highest degree misapplied, unassisted by liberal and enlightened views, and directed only to the most narrow and contemptible purposes.

The residence I have been describing, might to many persons have appeared attended with intolerable inconveniences. But, exclusively of its advantages as a field for speculation, it was Elysium, com-

pared with that from which I had just escaped. Displeasing company, incommodious apartments, filthiness and riot, lost the circumstance by which they could most effectually disgust, when I was not compelled to remain with them. All hardships I could patiently endure, in comparison with the menace of a violent and untimely death. There was no suffering that I could not persuade myself to consider as trivial, except that which flowed from the tyranny, the frigid precaution, or the inhuman revenge of my own species.

My recovery advanced in the most favourable manner. The attention and kindness of my protector were incessant, and the rest caught the spirit from his example. The old woman who superintended the houshold, still retained her animosity. She considered me as the cause of the expulsion of Gines from the fraternity; Gines had been the object of

her particular partiality; and, zealous as she was for the public concern, she thought an old and experienced sinner for a raw probationer but an ill exchange. Add to which, that her habits inclined her to moroseness and discontent, and that persons of her complexion seem unable to exist, without some object upon which to employ the superfluity of their gall. She lost no opportunity, upon the most trifling occasion, of displaying her animosity; and ever and anon eyed me with a furious glance of canine hunger for my destruction. Nothing was more evidently mortifying to her, than the procrastination of her malice; nor could she bear to think that a fierceness so gigantic and uncontrolable, should show itself in nothing more terrific, than the pigmy spite of a chambermaid. For myself, I had been accustomed to the warfare of formidable adversaries, and the encounter of alarming dangers; and what I saw

of her spleen, had not power sufficient to disturb my tranquillity.

As I recovered, I told my story, except so far as related to the detection of Mr. Falkland's eventful secret, to my protector. That particular I could not as yet prevail upon myself to disclose, even in a situation like this, which seemed to preclude the possibility of its being made use of to the disadvantage of my persecutor. My present auditor however, whose habits of thinking were extremely opposite to those of Mr. Forester, did not, from the obscurity which flowed from this reserve, deduce any unfavourable conclusion. His penetration was such, as to afford little room for an impostor to hope to mislead him by a fictitious statement, and he confided in that penetration. So confiding, the simplicity and integrity of my manner, carried conviction to his mind, and insured his good opinion and friendship.

He listened to my story with eagerness, and commented on the several parts as I related them. He said, that this was only one fresh instance of the tyranny and perfidiousness, exercised by the powerful members of the community, against those who were less privileged than themselves. Nothing could be more clear, than their readiness to sacrifice the human species at large, to their meanest interest or wildest caprice. Who that saw the situation in its true light, would wait till their oppressors thought fit to decree their destruction, and not take arms in their defence while it was yet in their power? Which was most meritorious, the unresisting and dastardly submission of a slave, or the enterprise and gallantry of the man who dared to assert his claims? Since, by the partial administration of our laws, innocence, when power was armed against it, had nothing better to hope for than guilt, what man

of true courage would fail to set these laws at defiance, and, if he must suffer by their injustice, at least take care that he had first shown his contempt of their yoke? For himself he should certainly never have embraced his present calling, had he not been stimulated to it by these cogent and irresistible reasons; and he hoped, as experience had so forcibly brought a conviction of this sort to my mind, that he should, for the future, have the happiness to associate me to his pursuits.—It will presently be seen with what event these hopes were attended.

Numerous were the precautions, exercised by the gang of thieves with whom I now resided, to elude the vigilance of the satellites of justice. It was one of their rules, to commit no depredations, but at a considerable distance from the place of their residence; and Gines had transgressed this regulation, in the attack to which I was indebted for my

present asylum. After having possessed themselves of any booty, they took care, in the sight of the persons whom they had robbed, to pursue a route, as nearly as possible opposite to that which led to their true haunts. The appearance of their place of residence, together with its environs, was peculiarly desolate and forlorn, and it had the reputation of being haunted. The old woman I have described, had long been its inhabitant, and was commonly supposed to be its only inhabitant; and her person well accorded with the rural ideas of a witch. Her lodgers never went out or came in, but with the utmost circumspection, and generally by night. The lights which were occasionally seen, from various parts of her habitation, were, by the country people, regarded with horror as supernatural; and, if the noise of revelry at any time saluted their ears, it was imagined to proceed from a carnival of devils.

With all these advantages, the thieves did not venture to reside here but by intervals: they frequently absented themselves for months, and resided in a different part of the country. The old woman sometimes attended them in these transportations, and sometimes remained; but, in all cases, her removal took place either sooner or later than theirs, so that the nicest observer could scarcely have traced any connection between her re-appearances, and the alarms of depredation that were frequently given; and the festival of demons seemed, to the terrified rustics, indifferently to take place whether she were present or absent.

RAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

CHAP. III.

One day, while I continued in this situation, a circumstance occurred, which involuntarily attracted my attention. Two of our people had been sent to a town at some distance, for the purpose of procuring us the things of which we were in want. After having delivered these to our landlady, they retired to one corner of the room, and, one of them pulling a printed paper from his pocket, they mutually occupied themselves in examining its contents. I was sitting in an easy chair by the fire, being considerably better than I had been, though still in a weak and languid state. Having read for a considerable time, they looked at me, and then at the paper, and then at me again. They then went out of the

room together, as if to consult without interruption upon something which that paper suggested to them. Some time after they returned; and my protector, who had been absent upon the former occasion, entered the room at the same instant.

Captain! said one of them with an air of pleasure, look here! we have found a prize! I believe it is as good as a bank-note of a hundred guineas.

Mr. Raymond (that was his name) took the paper and read. He paused for a moment. He then crushed the paper in his hand; and, turning to the person from whom he had received it, said, with the tone of a man confident in the success of his reasons,

What use have you for these hundred guineas? Are you in want? Are you in distress? Can you be contented to purchase them at the price of treachery? of violating the laws of hospitality?

Faith, captain, I do not very well know. After having violated other laws, I do not see why we should be frightened at an old saw. We pretend to judge for ourselves, and ought to be above shrinking from a bugbear of a proverb. Beside, this is a good deed, and I should think no more harm of being the ruin of such a thief, than of getting my dinner.

A thief! You talk of thieves!———

Not so fast, captain. God defend that I should say a word against thieving as a general occupation! But one man steals in one way, and another in another. For my part, I go upon the highway, and take from any stranger I meet, what it is a hundred to one he can very well spare. I see nothing to be found fault with in that. But I have as much conscience as another man. Because I laugh at assizes and great wigs and the gallows, and because I will not be frightened from an innocent action, when the lawyers say me

nay, does it follow that I am to have a fellow-feeling for pilferers, and rascally servants, and people that have neither justice nor principle? No: I have too much respect for the trade, not to be a foe to interlopers, and people that so much the more deserve my hatred, because the world calls them by my name.

You are wrong, Larkins! You certainly ought not to employ against people that you hate, supposing your hatred to be reasonable, the instrumentality of that law which in your practice you defy. Be consistent. Either be the friend of law, or its adversary. Depend upon it that, wherever there are laws at all, there will be laws against such people as you and me. Either therefore we all of us deserve the vengeance of the law, or law is not the proper instrument for correcting the misdeeds of mankind. I tell you this, because I would fain have you aware, that an informer or a king's evi-

dence, a man who takes advantage of the confidence of another in order to betray him, who sells the life of his neighbour for money, or coward-like, upon any pretence, calls in the law to do that for him which he cannot or dares not do for himself, is the vilest of rascals. But in the present case, if your reasons were the best in the world, they do not apply.

While Mr. Raymond was speaking, the rest of the gang came into the room. He immediately turned to them and said,

My friends, here is a piece of intelligence that Larkins has just brought in, which with his leave I will lay before you.

Then unfolding the paper he had received, he continued: This is the description of a felon with the offer of a hundred guineas for his apprehension. Larkins picked it up at ——. By the time and other circumstances, but par-

ticularly by the minute description of his person, there can be no doubt but the object of it is our young friend, whose life I was, a while ago, the instrument of saving. He is charged here with having taken advantage of the confidence of his patron and benefactor, to rob him of property to a large amount. Upon this charge he was committed to the county jail, from whence he made his escape about a fortnight ago, without venturing to stand his trial, a circumstance which is stated by the advertiser as tantamount to a confession of his guilt.

My friends, I was acquainted with the particulars of this story some time before. This lad let me into his history, at a time, that he could not possibly foresee that he should stand in need of that precaution as an antidote against danger. He is not guilty of what is laid to his charge. Which of you is so ignorant as to suppose, that his escape is any confirma-

tion of his guilt? Who ever thinks, when he is apprehended for trial, of his innocence or guilt as being at all material to the issue? Who ever was fool enough to volunteer a trial, where those who are to decide, think more of the horror of the thing of which he is accused, than whether he were the person that did it; and where the nature of our motives is to be collected from a set of ignorant witnesses, that no wise man would trust for a fair representation of the most indifferent action of his life?

The poor lad's story is a long one, and I will not trouble you with it now. But from that story it is as clear as the day that, because he wished to leave the service of his master, because he had been perhaps a little too inquisitive in his master's concerns, and because, as I suspect, he had been trusted with some important secrets, his master conceived an antipathy against him. This antipathy

gradually proceeded to such a length, as to induce the master to forge this vile accusation. He seems willing to hang the lad out of the way, rather than suffer him to go where he pleases, or get beyond the reach of his power. Williams has told me the story with such ingenuousness, that I am as sure that he is guiltless of what they lay to his charge, as that I am so myself. Nevertheless the man's servants who were called in to hear the accusation, and his relation, who as justice of the peace made out the mittimus, and who had the folly to think he could be impartial, gave it on his side with one voice, and thus afforded Williams a sample of what he had expected in the sequel.

Larkins, who when he received this paper had no previous knowledge of particulars, was for taking advantage of it for the purpose of earning the hundred guineas. Are you of that mind, now you have heard them? Will you, for so pal-

try a consideration, deliver up the lamb into the jaws of the wolf? Will you abet the purposes of this sanguinary rascal, who, not contented with driving his late dependent from house and home, depriving him of character and all the ordinary means of subsistence, and leaving him almost without a refuge, still thirsts for his blood? If no other person have the courage to set limits to the tyranny of courts of justice, shall not we? Shall we, who earn our livelihood by generous daring, be indebted for a penny to the vile artifices of the informer? Shall we, against whom the whole species is in arms, refuse our protection to an individual, more exposed to, but still less deserving of, their persecution than ourselves?

The representation of the captain produced an instant effect upon the whole company. They all exclaimed, Betray him! No, not for worlds! He is safe. We will protect him at the hazard of our

lives. If fidelity and honour be banished from thieves, where shall they find refuge upon the face of the earth*? Larkins in particular thanked the captain for his interference, and swore that he would rather part with his right hand, than injure so worthy a lad, or assist such an unheard-of villainy. Saying this, he took me by the hand, and bade me fear nothing. Under their roof, no harm should ever befal me; and, even if the understrappers of the law should discover my retreat, they would to a man die in my defence, sooner than a hair of my head should be hurt. I thanked him most sincerely for his good will; but I was principally struck with the fervent benevolence of my benefactor. I told them, I found that my enemies were inexorable, and would never be appeased but with my blood; and I assured them

* This seems to be the parody of a celebrated saying of John King of France, who was taken prisoner by the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers.

with the most solemn and earnest veracity, that I had done nothing to deserve the persecution which was exercised against me.

The spirit and energy of Mr. Raymond had been such, as to leave no part for me to perform in repelling this unlooked-for danger. Nevertheless, it left a very serious impression upon my mind. I had always placed some confidence in the returning equity of Mr. Falkland. Though he persecuted me with bitterness, I could not help believing that he did it unwillingly, and I was persuaded it would not be for ever. A man, whose original principles had been so full of rectitude and honour, could not fail at some time to recollect the injustice of his conduct, and to remit his asperity. This idea had been always present to me, and had in no small degree conspired to instigate my exertions. I said, I will convince my persecutor that I am of more value,

than that I should be sacrificed purely by way of precaution. These expectations on my part had been encouraged by Mr. Falkland's behaviour upon the question of my imprisonment and by various particulars, which had occurred since.

But this new incident gave the subject a totally different appearance. I saw him, not contented with blasting my reputation, confining me for a period in jail, and reducing me to the situation of a houseless vagabond, still continuing his pursuit under these forlorn circumstances, with unmitigable cruelty. Indignation and resentment seemed now, for the first time, to penetrate my mind. I knew his misery so well, I was so fully acquainted with its cause, and strongly impressed with the idea of its being unmerited, that, while I suffered deeply, I still continued to pity, rather than hate my persecutor. But this incident intro-

duced some change into my feelings. I said, Surely he might now believe that he had sufficiently disarmed me, and might at length suffer me to be at peace. At least ought he not to be contented to leave me to my fate, the perilous and uncertain condition of an escaped felon, instead of thus whetting the animosity and vigilance of my countrymen against me? Were his interference on my behalf in opposition to the stern severity of Mr. Forester, and his various acts of kindness since, a mere part that he played in order to lull me into patience? Was he perpetually haunted with the fear of an ample retaliation, and for that purpose did he personate remorse, at the very moment that he was secretly keeping every engine at play that could secure my destruction? The very suspicion of such a fact, filled me with inexpressible horror, and struck a sudden chill through every fibre of my frame.

My wound was by this time completely healed, and it became absolutely necessary that I should form some determination respecting the future. My habits of thinking, were such as gave me an uncontrolable repugnance to the vocation of my hosts. I did not indeed feel that aversion and abhorrence to the men, which are commonly entertained. I saw and respected their good qualities and their virtues. I was by no means inclined to believe them worse men, or more hostile in their dispositions to the welfare of their species, than the generality of those that look down upon them with most censure. But, though I did not cease to love them as individuals, my eyes were perfectly open to their mistakes. If I should otherwise have been in danger of being misled, it was my fortune to have studied felons in a jail, before I studied them in their state of comparative prosperity; and this was an in-

fallible antidote to the poison. I saw that in this profession were exerted uncommon energy, ingenuity and fortitude, and I could not help recollecting how admirably beneficial such qualities might be made in the great theatre of human affairs; while, in their present direction, they were thrown away, upon purposes diametrically at war with the first interests of human society. Nor were their proceedings less injurious to their own interest, than incompatible with the general welfare. The man who risks or sacrifices his life for the public cause, is rewarded with the testimony of an approving conscience; but persons, who wantonly defy the necessary, though atrociously exaggerated precautions of government in the matter of property, at the same time that they commit an alarming hostility against the whole, are, as to their own concerns, scarcely less absurd and self-neglectful, than the man who

should set himself up as a mark for a file of musqueteers to shoot at.

Viewing the subject in this light, I not only determined that I would have no share in their occupation myself, but thought I could not do less, in return for the benefits I had received from them, than endeavour to dissuade them from an employment, in which they must themselves be the greatest sufferers. My expostulation met with a various reception. All the persons to whom it was addressed, had been tolerably successful in persuading themselves of the innocence of their calling; and what remained of doubt in their mind, was smothered, and, so to speak, laboriously forgotten. Some of them laughed at my arguments, as a ridiculous piece of missionary quixotism. Others, and particularly our captain, repelled them with the boldness of a man that knows he has got the strongest side. But this sentiment of ease and self-satis-

faction did not long remain. They had been used to arguments derived from religion and the sacredness of law. They had long ago shaken these from them, as so many prejudices. But my view of the subject appealed to principles which they could not contest, and had by no means the air of that customary reproof, which is for ever dinned in our ears without finding one responsive chord in our hearts. Finding themselves urged with objections unexpected and cogent, some of those to whom I addressed them, began to grow peevish and impatient of the importunate remonstrance. But this was by no means the case with Mr. Raymond. He was possessed of a candour that I have seldom seen equalled. He was surprised to hear objections so powerful, to that which, as a matter of speculation, he believed he had examined on all sides. He revolved them with impartiality and care. He admitted them slowly, but he at length

fully admitted them. He had now but one rejoinder in reserve.

Alas, Williams, said he, it would have been fortunate for me, if these views had been presented to me, previously to my embracing my present profession. It is now too late. Those very laws which, by a perception of their iniquity, drove me to what I am, now preclude my return. God, we are told, judges of men by what they are at the period of judgment, and, whatever be their crimes, if they have seen and abjured the folly of those crimes, receives them to favour. But the institutions of countries that profess to worship this God, admit no such distinctions. They leave no room for amendment, and seem to have a brutal delight in confounding the demerits of offenders. It signifies not what is the character of the individual at the hour of trial. How changed, how spotless, and how useful, avails him nothing. If they

discover, at the distance of fourteen *, or of forty years †, an action for which the law ordains that his life shall be the forfeit, though the interval should have been spent with the purity of a saint and the devotedness of a patriot, they disdain to enquire into it. What then can I do? Am I not compelled to go on in folly, having once begun?

* Eugene Aram. See Annual Register, for 1759.
† William Andrew Horne. *Ditto, ditto.*

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. IV.

I WAS extremely affected by this plea. I could only answer, that Mr. Raymond must himself be the best judge of the course it became him to hold ; I trusted the case was not so desperate as he imagined.

This subject was pursued no further, and was in some degree driven from my thoughts, by an incident of a very extraordinary nature.

I have already mentioned the animosity that was entertained against me, by the infernal portress of this solitary mansion. Gines, the expelled member of the gang, had been her particular favourite. She submitted to his exile indeed, because her genius felt subdued by

the energy and inherent greatness of Mr. Raymond; but she submitted with murmuring and discontent. Not daring to resent the conduct of the principal in this affair, she collected all the bitterness of her spirit against me.

To the unpardonable offence I had thus committed in the first instance, were added the reasonings I had lately offered against the profession of robbery. Robbery was a fundamental article in the creed of this hoary veteran, and she listened to my objections with the same unaffected astonishment and horror, that an old woman of other habits would listen to one, who objected to the agonies and dissolution of the creator of the world, or to the garment of imputed righteousness prepared to envelop the souls of the elect. Like the religious bigot, she was sufficiently disposed to avenge a hostility against her opinions with the weapons of sublunary warfare.

Meanwhile I had smiled at the impotence of her malice, as an object of contempt, rather than alarm. She perceived, as I imagine, the slight estimation in which I held her, and this did not a little increase the perturbation of her thoughts.

One day I was left alone, with no other person in the house than this swarthy sybil. The thieves had set out upon an expedition about two hours after sunset on the preceding evening, and had not returned, as they were accustomed to do, before day-break the next morning. This was a circumstance that sometimes occurred, and therefore did not produce any extraordinary alarm. At one time the scent of prey would lead them beyond the bounds they had prescribed themselves, and at another the fear of pursuit: the life of a thief is always uncertain. The old woman had been preparing during the night, for the meal to

which they would expect to sit down as soon as might be after their return.

For myself I had learned from their habits, to be indifferent to the regular return of the different parts of the day, and in some degree to turn day into night, and night into day. I had been now several weeks in this residence, and the season was considerably advanced. I had passed some hours during the night in ruminating on my situation. The character and manners of the men among whom I lived, were disgusting to me. Their brutal ignorance, their ferocious habits, and their coarse behaviour, instead of becoming more tolerable by custom, hourly added force to my original aversion. The uncommon vigour of their minds, and acuteness of their invention, in the business they pursued, compared with the odiousness of that business and their habitual depravity, awaked in me sensations too painful to be endured. Mo-

ral disapprobation, at least in a mind unsubdued by philosophy, I found to be one of the most fertile sources of disquiet and uneasiness. From this pain the society of Mr. Raymond by no means relieved me. He was indeed eminently superior to the vices of the rest; but I did not less exquisitely feel how much he was out of his place, how disproportionably associated, or how contemptibly employed. I had attempted to counteract the errors under which he and his companions laboured; but I had found the obstacles that presented themselves greater than I had imagined.

What was I to do? Was I to wait the issue of this my missionary undertaking, or was I to withdraw myself immediately? When I withdrew, ought that to be done privately, or with an open avowal of my design, and an endeavour to supply by the force of example what was deficient in my arguments? It was

certainly improper, as I declined all participation in the pursuits of these men, did not pay my contribution of hazard to the means by which they subsisted, and had no congeniality with their habits, that I should continue to reside with them longer than was absolutely necessary. There was one circumstance that rendered this deliberation particularly pressing. They intended in a few days removing from their present habitation, to a haunt to which they were accustomed, in a distant county. If I did not propose to continue with them, it would perhaps be wrong to accompany them in this removal. The state of calamity to which my inexorable persecutor had reduced me, had made the encounter even of a den of robbers a fortunate adventure. But the time that had since elapsed, had probably been sufficient to relax the keenness of the quest that was made after me. I sighed for that solitude

and obscurity, that retreat from the vexations of the world and the voice even of common fame, which I had proposed to myself when I broke my prison.

Such were the meditations which now occupied my mind. At length I grew fatigued with continual contemplation, and to relieve myself pulled out a pocket Horace, the legacy of my beloved Brightwel! I read with avidity the epistle in which he so beautifully describes to Fuscus the grammarian, the pleasures of rural tranquillity and independence. By this time the sun rose from behind the eastern hills, and I opened my casement to contemplate it. The day commenced with peculiar brilliancy, and was accompanied with all those charms, which the poets of nature, as they have been styled, have so much delighted to describe. There was something in this scene, particularly as succeeding to the active exertions of intellect, that soothed the mind to com-

posure. Insensibly a confused reverie invaded my faculties, I withdrew from the window, threw myself upon the bed, and fell asleep.

I do not recollect the precise images which in this situation passed through my thoughts, but I know that they concluded with the idea of some person, the agent of Mr. Falkland, approaching to assassinate me. This thought had probably been suggested, by the project I meditated of entering once again into the world, and throwing myself within the sphere of his possible vengeance. I imagined that the design of the murderer was to come upon me by surprise, that I was aware of his design, and yet by some fascination had no thought of evading it. I heard the steps of the murderer as he cautiously approached. I seemed to listen to his constrained, yet audible breathings. He came up to the corner where I was placed, and then stopped.

The idea became too terrible, I started, opened my eyes, and beheld the execrable hag before mentioned, standing over me with a butcher's cleaver. I shifted my situation with a speed that seemed too swift for volition, and the blow already aimed at my scull, sunk impotent upon the bed. Before she could wholly recover her posture, I sprung upon her, seized hold of the weapon, and had nearly wrested it from her. But in a moment she resumed her strength and her desperate purpose, and we had a furious struggle, she impelled by inveterate malice, and I resisting for my life. Her vigour was truly Amazonian, and at no time had I ever occasion to contend with a more formidable opponent. Her glance was sudden and exact, and the shock with which from time to time she impelled her whole frame, inconceivably vehement. At length I was victorious, took from her her instrument of death,

and threw her upon the ground. Till now the studiedness of her exertions had curbed her rage; but now she gnashed with her teeth, her eyes seemed as if starting from their sockets, and her body heaved with uncontrolable insanity.

Rascal! devil! she exclaimed, what do you mean to do to me?

Till now the scene had passed uninterrupted by a single word.

Nothing, I replied: begone, infernal witch! and leave me to myself.

Leave you! No: I will thrust my fingers through your ribs, and drink your blood!—You conquer me?—Ha, ha!—Yes, yes! you shall!—I will sit upon you, and press you to hell! I will roast you with brimstone, and dash your entrails into your eyes!—Ha, ha!—ha!

Saying this, she sprung up, and prepared to attack me with redoubled fury. I seized her hands, and compelled her to sit upon the bed. Thus restrained, she

continued to express the tumult of her thoughts by grinning, by certain furious motions of her head, and by occasional vehement efforts to disengage herself from my grasp. These contortions and starts were of the nature of those fits, in which the patients are commonly supposed to need three or four persons to hold them. But I found by experience that, under the circumstances in which I was placed, my single strength was sufficient. The spectacle of her emotions was inconceivably frightful. Her violence at length however began to abate, and she became persuaded of the hopelessness of the contest.

Let me go! said she. Why do you hold me? I will not be held!

I wanted you gone from the first, replied I. Are you contented to go now?

Yes, I tell you, misbegotten villain! Yes, rascal!

I immediately loosed my hold. She

flew to the door, and, holding it in her hand, said, I will be the death of you yet: you shall not be your own man twenty-four hours longer! With these words she shut the door, and locked it upon me. An action so totally unexpected startled me. Whither was she gone? What was it she intended? To perish by the machinations of such a hag as this, was a thought not to be endured. Death in any form, brought upon us by surprise, and for which the mind has had no time to prepare, is inexpressibly terrible. My thoughts wandered in breathless horror and confusion, and all within was uproar. I endeavoured to break the door, but in vain. I went round the room in search of some tool to assist me. At length I rushed against it with a desperate effort, to which it yielded, and had nearly thrown me from the top of the stairs to the bottom.

I descended with all possible caution

and vigilance. I entered the room which served us for a kitchen, but it was deserted. I searched every other apartment in vain. I went out among the ruins; still I discovered nothing of my late assailant. It was extraordinary: what could be become of her? what was I to conclude from her disappearance! I reflected on her parting menace. "I should not be my own man twenty-four hours longer." It was mysterious! it did not seem to be the menace of assassination.

Suddenly the recollection of the handbill brought to us by Larkins, rushed upon my memory. Was it possible she alluded to that in her parting words? Would she set out upon such an expedition by herself? Was it not dangerous to the whole fraternity, if, without the smallest precaution, she should bring the officers of justice into the midst of them? It was perhaps improbable she would engage in an undertaking thus desperate. It was not

however easy to answer for the conduct of a person in her state of mind. Should I wait, and risk the preservation of my liberty upon the issue?

To this question I returned an immediate negative. I had resolved in a short time to quit my present situation, and the difference of a little sooner or a little later, could not be very material. It promised to be neither agreeable nor prudent for me to remain under the same roof, with a person who had manifested such a fierce and inexpiable hostility. But the consideration which had inexpressibly the most weight with me, belonged to the ideas of imprisonment, trial, and death. The longer they had formed the subject of my contemplation, the more forcibly was I impelled to avoid them. I had entered upon a system of action for that purpose; I had already made many sacrifices; and I believed that I would never miscarry in this project through any neglect of mine.

The thought of what was reserved for me by my persecutors sickened my very soul; and the more intimately I was acquainted with oppression and injustice, the more deeply was I penetrated with the abhorrence to which they are entitled.

Such were the reasons that determined me, instantly, abruptly, without leave-taking, or acknowledgment for the peculiar and repeated favours I had received, to quit a habitation to which, for six weeks, I had apparently been indebted for protection from trial, conviction, and an ignominious death. I had come hither pennyless; I quitted my abode with the sum of a few guineas in my possession, Mr. Raymond having insisted upon my taking a share, at the time that each man received his dividend from the common stock. Though I had reason to suppose that the heat of the pursuit against me would be somewhat remitted by the time that had elapsed, the magnitude of the

mischief that, in an unfavourable event, might fall on me, determined me to neglect no imaginable precaution. I recollected the hand-bill which was the source of my present alarm, and conceived that one of the principal dangers which threatened me, was the recognition of my person, either by such as had previously known me, or even by strangers. It seemed prudent therefore to disguise it as effectually as I could. For this purpose I had recourse to a parcel of tattered garments, that lay in a neglected corner of our habitation. The disguise I chose was that of a beggar. Upon this plan I threw off my shirt. I tied a handkerchief about my head, with which I took care to cover one of my eyes. Over this I drew a piece of an old woollen night-cap. I selected the worst apparel I could find, and this I reduced to a still more deplorable condition, by rents that I purposely made in various places. Thus equipped, I sur-

veyed myself in a looking-glass. I had rendered my appearance complete, nor would any one have suspected that I was not one of the fraternity to which I assumed to belong. I said, This is the form in which tyranny and injustice oblige me to seek for refuge: but better, a thousand times better is it, thus to incur contempt with the dregs of mankind, than trust to the tender mercies of our superiors!

AHAJA SERFOGI'S SARAS

CHAP. V.

The only rule that I laid down to myself in traversing the forest, was to take a direction as opposite as possible to that which led to the scene of my late imprisonment. After about two hours walking, I arrived at the termination of this ruder scene, and reached that part of the county which is inclosed and cultivated. Here I sat down by the side of a brook, and, pulling out a crust of bread which I had brought away with me, rested and refreshed myself. While I continued in this place, I began to ruminate upon the plan I should lay down for my future proceedings; and my propensity now led me, as it had done in a former instance, to fix upon the capital, which

I believed, beside its other recommendations, would prove the safest place for concealment. During these thoughts I saw a couple of peasants passing at a small distance, and enquired of them respecting the London road. By their description I understood, that the most immediate way would be to repass a part of the forest, and that it would be necessary to approach considerably nearer to the county-town, than I was at the spot which I had at present reached. I did not imagine that this could be a circumstance of considerable importance. My disguise appeared to be a sufficient security against momentary danger; and I therefore took a path, though not the most direct one, which led towards the point they suggested.

Some of the occurrences of the day are deserving to be mentioned. As I passed along a road which lay in my way for a ew miles, I saw a carriage advancing in

the opposite direction. I debated with myself for a moment, whether I should pass it without notice, or should take this occasion, by voice or gesture, of making an essay of my trade. This idle disquisition was however speedily driven from my mind, when I perceived that the carriage was Mr. Falkland's. The suddenness of the encounter struck me with terror, though perhaps it would have been difficult for calm reflection to have discovered any considerable danger. I withdrew from the road, and skulked behind a hedge, till it should have completely gone by. I was too much occupied with my own feelings, to venture to examine whether or no the terrible adversary of my peace were in the carriage. I persuaded myself that he was. I looked after the equipage, and exclaimed, There you may see the luxurious accommodations and appendages of guilt, and here the forlornness that waits upon in-

nocence!—I was to blame to imagine that my case was singular in that respect. I only mention it, to show how the most trivial circumstance contributes to embitter the cup to the man of adversity. The thought however was a transient one. I had learned this lesson from my sufferings, not to indulge in the luxury of discontent. As my mind recovered its tranquillity, I began to enquire whether the phenomenon I had just seen could have any relation to myself. But though my mind was extremely inquisitive and versatile in this respect, I could discover no sufficient ground upon which to build a judgment.

At night I entered a little public house at the extremity of a village, and, seating myself in a corner of the kitchen, asked for some bread and cheese. While I was sitting at my repast, three or four labourers came in for a little refreshment after their work. Ideas respecting

the inequality of rank, pervade every order in society; and, as my appearance was meaner and more contemptible than theirs, I found it expedient to give way to these gentry of a village alehouse, and remove to an obscurer station. I was surprised, and not a little startled, to find them fall almost immediately into conversation about my history, whom, with a slight variation of circumstances, they styled the notorious housebreaker, Kit Williams.

Damn the fellow, said one of them, one never hears of any thing else. O' my life, I think he makes talk for the whole country.

That is very true, replied another. I was at the market-town to-day to sell some oats for my master, and there was a hue and cry, some of them thought they had got him, but it was a false alarm.

That hundred guineas is a fine thing,

rejoined the first. I should be glad if so be as how it fell in my way.

For the matter of that, said his companion, I should like a hundred guineas as well as another. But I cannot be of your mind for all that. I should never think money would do me any good, that had been the means of bringing a Christian creature to the gallows.

Poh, that is all my granny! Some folks must be hanged, to keep the wheels of our state-folks a-going. Beside, I could forgive the fellow all his other robberies, but that he should have been so hardened as to break the house of his own master at last, that is too bad.

Lord, lord, replied the other, I see you know nothing of the matter! I will tell you how it was, as I learned it at the town. I question whether he ever robbed, his master at all. But hark you! you must know as how that squire Falkland was once tried for murder——

Yes, yes, we know that.

Well, he was as innocent as the child unborn. But I supposes as how he is a little soft or so. And so Kit Williams—Kit is a devilish cunning fellow, you may judge that from his breaking prison no less than five times,——so, I say he threatened to bring his master to trial at 'sizes all over again, and so frightened him, and got money from him at divers times. Till at last one squire Forester, a relation of t'other, found it all out. And he made the hell of a rumpus, and sent away Kit to prison in a twinky, and I believe he would have been hanged; for when two squires lay their heads together, they do not much matter law, you know; or else they twist the law to their own ends, I cannot exactly say which; but it is much at one, when the poor fellow's breath is out of his body.

Though this story was very circum-

stantially told and with a sufficient detail of particulars, it did not pass unquestioned. Each man maintained the justness of his own statement, and the dispute was long and obstinately pursued. Historians and commentators at length withdrew together. The terrors with which I was seized when this conversation began, were extreme. I stole a side-long glance to one quarter and another, to observe if any man's attention were turned upon me. I trembled as if in an ague-fit; and, at first, felt continual impulses to quit the house, and take to my heels. I drew closer to my corner, held aside my head, and seemed from time to time to undergo a total revolution of the animal economy.

At length the tide of ideas turned. Perceiving they paid no attention to me, the recollection of the full security my disguise afforded, recurred strongly to my thoughts; and I began inwardly to exult,

though I did not venture to obtrude myself to examination. By degrees I began to be amused at the absurdity of their tales, and the variety of the falshoods I heard asserted around me. My soul seemed to expand; I felt a pride in the self-possession and lightness of heart with which I could listen to the scene; and I determined to prolong and heighten the enjoyment. Accordingly, when they were withdrawn, I addressed myself to our hostess, a buxom, bluff, good-humoured widow, and asked what sort of a man this Kit Williams might be? She replied that, as she was informed, he was as handsome, likely a lad, as any in four counties round; and that she loved him for his cleverness, by which he outwitted all the keepers they could set over him, and made his way through stone walls, as if they were so many cobwebs. I observed that the country was so thoroughly alarmed, that I did not

think it possible he should escape the pursuit that was set up after him. This idea excited her immediate indignation: she said, she hoped he was far enough away by this time, but, if not, she wished the curse of God might light on them that betrayed so noble a fellow to an ignominious end!—Though she little thought that the person of whom she spoke was so near her, yet the sincere and generous warmth with which she interested herself in my behalf, gave me considerable pleasure. With this sensation, to sweeten the fatigues of the day and the calamities of my situation, I retired from the kitchen to a neighbouring barn, laid myself down upon some straw, and fell into a profound sleep.

The next day about noon as I was pursuing my journey, I was overtaken by two men on horseback, who stopped me, to enquire respecting a person that they supposed might have passed along

that road. As they proceeded in their description, I perceived, with astonishment and terror, that I was myself the person to whom their questions related. They entered into a tolerably accurate detail of the various characteristics by which my person might best be distinguished. They said, they had good reason to believe that I had been seen at a place in that county the very day before. While they were speaking, a third person who had fallen behind, came up; and my alarm was greatly increased, upon seeing that this person was the servant of Mr. Forester, who had visited me in prison about a fortnight before my escape. My best resource in this crisis was composure and apparent indifference. It was fortunate for me that my disguise was so complete, that the eye of Mr. Falkland itself could scarcely have penetrated it. I had been aware for some time before, that this was a refuge which events

might make necessary, and had endeavoured to arrange and methodise my ideas upon the subject. From my youth I had possessed a considerable facility in the art of imitation; and, when I quitted my retreat in the habitation of Mr. Raymond, I adopted, along with my beggar's attire, a peculiar slouching and clownish gait, to be used whenever there should appear the least chance of my being observed, together with an Irish brogue which I had had an opportunity of studying in my prison. Such are the miserable expedients and so great the studied artifice, which man, who never deserves the name of manhood but in proportion as he is erect and independent, may find it necessary to employ, for the purpose of eluding the inexorable animosity and unfeeling tyranny of his fellow man! I had made use of this brogue, though I have not thought it necessary to write it down in my narrative, in the

conversation of the village alehouse: Mr. Forester's servant, as he came up, observed that his companions were engaged in conversation with me; and, guessing at the subject, asked whether they had gained any intelligence. He added to the information at which they had already hinted, that a resolution was taken to spare neither diligence nor expense for my discovery and apprehension, and that they were satisfied, if I were above ground and in the kingdom, it would be impossible for me to escape them.

Every new incident that had occurred to me, tended to impress upon my mind the extreme danger to which I was exposed. I could almost have imagined that I was the sole subject of general attention, and that the whole world was in arms to exterminate me. The very idea tingled through every fibre of my frame. But terrible as it

appeared to my imagination, it did but give new energy to my purpose; and I determined that I would not voluntarily resign the field, that is, properly speaking, my neck to the cord of the executioner, notwithstanding the greatest superiority in my assailants. But the incidents which had befallen me, though they did not change my purpose, induced me to examine over again the means by which it might be effected. The consequence of this revisal was, to determine me to bend my course to the nearest sea-port on the west side of the island, and transport myself to Ireland. I cannot now tell what it was, that inclined me to prefer this scheme to that which I had originally formed. Perhaps the latter, which had been for some time present to my imagination, for that reason appeared the more obvious of the two; and I found an appearance of complexity, which the mind did not stay

to explain, in substituting the other in its stead.

I arrived without further impediment at the place from which I intended to sail, enquired for a vessel, which I found ready to put to sea in a few hours, and agreed with the captain for my passage. Ireland had to me the disadvantage of being a dependency of the British government, and therefore a place of less security, than most other countries which are divided from it by the ocean. To judge from the diligence with which I seemed to be pursued in England, it was not improbable that the zeal of my persecutors might follow me to the other side of the channel. It was however sufficiently agreeable to my mind, that I was upon the point of being removed one step further, from the danger which was so grievous to my imagination.

Could there be any peril in the short interval that was to elapse, before the ves-

sel was to weigh anchor, and quit the English shore? Probably not. A very short time had intervened, between my determination for the sea, and my arrival at this place; and, if any new alarm had been given to my persecutors, it proceeded from the old woman a very few days before. I hoped I had anticipated their diligence. Meanwhile, that I might neglect no reasonable precaution, I went instantly on board, resolved that I would not unnecessarily, by walking the streets of the town, expose myself to any untoward accident. This was the first time I had upon any occasion taken leave of my native country.

RAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWA

MAHARAJA ... ATI MAHAL.

CHAP. VI.

THE time was now nearly elapsed that was prescribed for our stay, and orders for weighing anchor were every moment expected, when we were hailed by a boat from the shore, with two other men in it beside those that rowed. They entered our vessel in an instant. They were officers of justice. The passengers, five persons beside myself, were ordered upon deck for examination. I was inexpressibly disturbed at the occurrence of such a circumstance in so unseasonable a moment. I took it for granted that it was of me that they were in search. Was it possible that, by any unaccountable accident, they should have got an intimation of my disguise? It was infinitely

more distressing to encounter them upon this narrow stage and under these pointed circumstances, than, as I had before encountered my pursuers, under the appearance of an indifferent person. My recollection however did not forsake me. I confided in my conscious disguise and my Irish brogue, as a rock of dependence against all accidents.

No sooner did we appear upon deck than, to my great consternation, I could observe the attention of our guests principally turned upon me. They asked a few frivolous questions of such of my fellow passengers as happened to be nearest to them; and then, turning to me, enquired my name, who I was, whence I came, and what had brought me there? I had scarcely opened my mouth to reply, when with one consent they laid hold of me, said I was their prisoner, and declared that my accent, together with the correspondence of my person, would be suf-

ficient to convict me before any court in England. I was hurried out of the vessel into the boat in which they came, and seated between them, as if by way of precaution, lest I should spring overboard, and by any means escape them.

I now took it for granted, that I was once more in the power of Mr. Falkland; and the idea was insupportably mortifying and oppressive to my imagination. Escape from his pursuit, freedom from his tyranny, were objects upon which my whole soul was bent; could no human ingenuity and exertion effect them? Did his power reach through all space, and his eye penetrate every concealment? Was he like that mysterious being, to protect us from whose fierce revenge mountains and hills, we are told, might fall on us in vain? No idea is more heart-sickening and tremendous than this. But, in my case, it was not a subject of reasoning or of faith; I could derive no com-

fort, either directly from the unbelie which, upon religious subjects, some men avow to their own minds; or secretly from the remoteness and incomprehensibility of the conception: it was an affair of sense; I felt the fangs of the tiger striking deep into my heart.

But though this impression was at first exceedingly strong, and accompanied with its usual attendants of dejection and pusillanimity, my mind soon began, as it were mechanically, to turn upon the consideration, of the distance between this sea-port and my county prison, and the various opportunities of escape that might offer themselves in the interval. My first duty was to avoid betraying myself more, than it might afterwards appear I was betrayed already. It was possible that, though apprehended, my apprehension might have been determined on upon some slight score, and that, by my dexterity, I might render my dis-

mission as sudden, as my arrest had been. It was even possible that I had been seized through a mistake, and that the present measure might have no connection with Mr. Falkland's affair. Upon every supposition, it was my business to gain information, and not to communicate it.

I soon found the benefit of this resolution. In my passage from the ship to the town, I did not utter a word. My conductors commented on my sulkiness, but remarked that it would avail me nothing, I should infallibly swing, as it was never known that any body got off, who was tried for robbing his majesty's mail. It is difficult to conceive the lightness of heart, which was communicated to me by these words: I persisted however in the silence I had meditated. From the rest of their conversation, which was sufficiently voluble, I learned that the mail from Edinburgh to London had been robbed about ten days before by two Irishmen, that one

of them was already secured, and that I was taken up upon suspicion of being the other. They had a description of his person which, though, as I afterwards found, it disagreed from mine in several material articles, appeared to them to tally to the minutest tittle. The intelligence that the whole proceeding against me was founded in a mistake, took an oppressive load from my mind. I believed that I should immediately be able to establish my innocence, to the satisfaction of any magistrate in the kingdom; and, though crossed in my plans, and thwarted in my design of quitting the island, even after I was already at sea, this was but a trifling inconvenience, compared with what I had had but too much reason to fear.

As soon as we came ashore, I was conducted to the house of a justice of peace, a man who had formerly been the captain of a collier, but who, having been successful in the world, had quitted this

wandering life, and for some years had had the honour to represent his majesty's person. We were detained for some time in a sort of anti-room, waiting his reverence's leisure. The persons by whom I had been taken up, were experienced in their trade, and insisted upon employing this interval in searching me, in presence of two of his worship's servants. They found upon me fifteen guineas and some silver. They required me to strip myself perfectly naked, that they might examine whether I had bank-notes concealed any where about my person. They took up the detached parcels of my miserable attire as I threw it from me, and felt them one by one, to discover whether the articles of which they were in search, might by any device be sewn up in them. To all this I submitted without murmuring. It might probably come to the same thing at last, and summary justice was sufficiently coincident with my views,

my principal object being to get, as soon as possible, out of the clutches of the respectacle persons who now had me in custody.

This operation was scarcely completed, before we were directed to be ushered into his worship's apartment. My accusers opened the charge, and told him they had been ordered to this town, upon an intimation that one of the persons who robbed the Edinburgh mail was to be found here; and that they had taken me on board a vessel which was by this time under sail for Ireland. Well, says his worship, that is your story; now let us hear what account the gentleman gives of himself. What is your name, ha, sirrah? and from what part of Tipperary are you pleased to come? I had already taken my determination upon this article; and, the moment I learned the particulars of the charge against me, resolved, for the present at least, to lay

aside my Irish accent, and speak my native tongue. This I had done in the very few words I had spoken to my conductors in the anti-room: they stared at the metamorphosis, but they had gone too far for it to be possible they should retract, in consistence with their honour. I now told the justice that I was no Irishman, nor had ever been in that country: I was a native of England. This occasioned a consulting of the deposition in which my person was supposed to be described, and which my conductors had brought with them for their direction. To be sure that required that the offender should be an Irishman.

Observing his worship hesitate, I thought this was the time to push the matter a little further. I referred to the paper, and showed that the description neither tallied as to height nor complexion. But then it did as to years and the colour of the hair; and it was not this

gentleman's habit, as he informed me, to squabble about trifles, or to let a man's neck out of the halter for a pretended flaw of a few inches in his stature. If a man were too short, he said, there was no remedy like a little stretching. The miscalculation in my case happened to be the opposite way, but his reverence did not think proper to lose his jest. Upon the whole he was somewhat at a loss how to proceed.

My conductors observed this, and began to tremble for the reward, which two hours ago they thought as good as in their own pocket. To retain me in custody they judged to be a safe speculation; if it turned out a mistake at last, they felt little apprehension of a suit for false imprisonment from a poor man, accoutred as I was, in rags. They therefore urged his worship to comply with their views. They told him that to be sure the evidence against me did not

prove so strong, as for their part they heartily wished it had, but that there were a number of suspicious circumstances respecting me. When I was brought up to them upon the deck of the vessel, I spoke as fine an Irish brogue as one shall hear in a summer's day; and now, all at once, there was not the least particle of it left. In searching me they had found upon me fifteen guineas; how should a poor beggar lad, such as I appeared, come honestly by fifteen guineas? Beside, when they had stripped me naked, though my dress was so shabby, my skin had all the sleekness of a gentleman. In fine, for what purpose could a poor beggar, who had never been in Ireland in his life, want to transport himself to that country? It was as clear as the sun, that I was no better than I should be. This reasoning, together with some significant winks and gestures between the justice and the plaintiffs, brought him

over to their way of thinking. He said, I must go to Warwick, where it seems the other robber was at present in custody, and be confronted with him; and, if then every thing appeared fair and satisfactory, I should be discharged.

No intelligence could be more terrible, than that which was contained in these words. That I, who had found the whole country in arms against me, who was exposed to a pursuit so peculiarly vigilant and penetrating, should now be dragged to the very centre of the kingdom, without power of accommodating myself to circumstances, and under the immediate custody of the officers of justice, seemed to my ears almost the same thing, as if he had pronounced upon me a sentence of death! I strenuously urged the injustice of this proceeding. I observed to the magistrate, that it was impossible I should be the person at whom the description pointed. It required an Irishman; I

was no Irishman. It described a person shorter than I; a circumstance of all others the least capable of being counterfeited. "There was not the slightest reason for detaining me in custody. I had been already disappointed of my voyage, and lost the money I had paid down, through the officiousness of these gentlemen in apprehending me." I assured his worship, that every delay under my circumstances was of the utmost importance to me. It was impossible to devise a greater injury to be inflicted on me, than the proposal that, instead of being permitted to proceed upon my voyage, I should be sent under arrest into the heart of the kingdom.

My remonstrances were vain. The justice was by no means inclined to digest the being expostulated with in this manner, by a person in the habiliments of a beggar. In the midst of my address he would have silenced me for my imperti-

nence, but that I spoke with an earnestness with which he was wholly unable to contend. When I had finished, he told me it was all to no purpose, and that it might have been better for me, if I had shown myself less insolent. " It was clear that I was a vagabond and a suspicious person. The more earnest I showed myself to get off, the more reason there was he should keep me fast. Perhaps, after all, I should turn out to be the felon in question. But, if I was not that, he had no doubt I was worse; a poacher, or, for what he knew, a murderer. He had a kind of a notion that he had seen my face before about some such affair; out of all doubt I was an old offender. He had it in his choice to send me to hard labour as a vagrant, upon the strength of my appearance and the contradictions in my story, or to order me to Warwick; and, out of the spontaneous goodness of his disposition, he chose the milder side of the

alternative. He could assure me I should not slip through his fingers. It was of more benefit to his majesty's government, to hang one such fellow as he suspected me to be, than, out of mistaken tenderness, to concern one's self for the good of all the beggars in the nation."

Finding it was impossible to work, in the way I desired, on a man so fully impressed with his own dignity and importance and my utter insignificance, I claimed that, at least, the money taken from my person should be restored to me. This was granted. His worship perhaps suspected that he had stretched a point in what he had already done, and was therefore the less unwilling to relax in this incidental circumstance. My conductors did not oppose themselves to this indulgence, for a reason that will appear in the sequel. The justice however, enlarged upon his clemency in this proceeding. "He did not know whether

he was not exceeding the spirit of his commission in complying with my demand. So much money in my possession, could not be honestly come by. But it was his temper, to soften, as far as could be done with propriety, the strict letter of the law."

There were cogent reasons, why the gentlemen, who had originally taken me into custody, chose that I should continue in their custody when my examination was over. Every man is, in his different mode, susceptible to a sense of honour; and they did not choose to encounter the disgrace that would accrue to them, if justice had been done. Every man is, in some degree, influenced by the love of power; and they were willing I should owe any benefit I received, to their sovereign grace and benignity, and not to the mere reason of the case. It was not however an unsubstantial honour and barren power, that formed the objects of

their pursuit: no, their views were deeper than that. In a word, though they chose that I should retire from the seat of justice, as I had come before it, a prisoner, yet the tenor of my examination had obliged them, in s ite of themselves, to suspect, that I was innocent of the charge they alleged against me. Apprehensive therefore, that the hundred guineas which had been offered as a reward for taking the robber, was completely out of the question in the present business, they were contented to strike at smaller game. Having conducted me to an inn, and given directions respecting a vehicle for the journey, they took me aside, while one of them addressed me in the following manner:

You see, my lad, how the case stands; hey for Warwick is the word! and, when we are got there, what may happen then I will not pretend for to say. Whether you are innocent or no, is no business of

mine; but you are not such a chicken as to suppose, if so be as you are innocent, that that will make your game altogether sure. You say, your business calls you another way, and as how you are in haste: I scorns to cross any man in his concerns, if I can help it. If therefore you will give us them there fifteen shiners, why snug is the word. They are of no use to you; a beggar, you know, is always at home. For the matter of that, we could have had them in the way of business, as you saw, at the justice's. But I am a man of principle; I loves to do things above board, and scorns to extort a shilling from any man.

He who is tinctured with principles of moral discrimination, is apt upon occasion to be run away with by his feelings in that respect, and to forget the immediate interest of the moment. I confess, that the first sentiment excited in my mind by this overture, was that of indig-

nation. I was irresistibly impelled to give utterance to this feeling, and postpone for a moment the consideration of the future. I replied, with the severity which so base a proceeding appeared to deserve. My bear-leaders were considerably surprised with my firmness, but seemed to think it beneath them to contest with me the principles I delivered. He who had made the overture, contented himself with replying, Well, well, my lad, do as you will; you are not the first man that has been hanged rather than part with a few guineas. His words did not pass unheeded by me. They were strikingly applicable to my situation, and I was determined not to suffer the occasion to escape me unimproved.

The pride of these gentlemen however was too great, to admit of further parley for the present. They left me abruptly; having first ordered an old man, the father of the landlady, to stay in the room

with me while they were absent. The old man they ordered, for security, to lock the door, and put the key in his pocket; at the same time mentioning below stairs the station in which they had left me, that the people of the house might have an eye upon what went forward, and not suffer me to escape. What was the intention of this manœuvre I am unable certainly to pronounce. Probably it was a sort of compromise between their pride and their avarice, being desirous, for some reason or other, to drop me as soon as convenient, and therefore determining to wait the result of my private meditations on the proposal they had made.

CHAP. VII.

THEY were no sooner withdrawn, than I cast my eye upon the old man, and found something extremely venerable and interesting in his appearance. His form was above the middle size. It indicated that his strength had been once considerable; nor was it at this time by any means annihilated. His hair was in considerable quantity, and was as white as the drifted snow. His complexion was healthful and ruddy, at the same time that his face was furrowed with wrinkles. In his eye there was remarkable vivacity, and his whole countenance was strongly expressive of good nature. The boorishness of his rank in society, was lost, in the

cultivation his mind had derived from habits of sensibility and benevolence.

The view of his figure immediately introduced a train of ideas into my mind, respecting the advantage to be drawn from the presence of such a person. The attempt to take any step without his consent was hopeless, for, though I should succeed with regard to him, he could easily give the alarm to other persons, who would, no doubt, be within call. Add to which, I could scarcely have prevailed on myself to offer any offence, to a person whose first appearance so strongly engaged my affection and esteem. In reality my thoughts were turned into a different channel. I was impressed with an ardent wish, to be able to call this man my benefactor. Pursued by a train of ill fortune, I could no longer consider myself as a member of society. I was a solitary being, cut off from the expectation of sympathy, kindness, and the good

will of mankind. I was strongly impelled, by the situation in which the present moment placed me, to indulge in a luxury, which my destiny seemed to have denied. I could not conceive the smallest comparison, between the idea of deriving my liberty from the spontaneous kindness of a worthy and excellent mind, and that of being indebted for it to the selfishness and baseness of the worst members of society. It was thus that I allowed myself in the wantonness of refinement, even in the midst of destruction.

Guided by these sentiments, I requested his attention to the circumstances by which I had been brought into my present situation. He immediately signified his assent, and said he would cheerfully listen to any thing I thought proper to communicate. I told him the persons who had just left me in charge with him, had come to this town for the purpose of apprehending some person who had been

guilty of robbing the mail; that they had chosen to take me up under this warrant, and had conducted me before a justice of the peace; that they had soon detected their mistake, the person in question being an Irishman, and differing from me both in country and stature; but that, by collusion between them and the justice, they were permitted to retain me in custody, and pretended to undertake to conduct me to Warwick to confront me with my accomplice; that, in searching me at the justice's, they had found a sum of money in my possession which excited their cupidity, and that they had just been proposing to me to give me my liberty, upon condition of my surrendering this sum into their hands. Under these circumstances, I requested him to consider, whether he would wish to render himself the instrument of their extortion. I put myself into his hands, and solemnly averred the truth of the facts I had just

stated. If he would assist me in my escape, it could have no other effect, than to disappoint the base passions of my conductors. I would upon no account, expose him to any real inconvenience; but I was well assured that the same generosity that should prompt him to a good deed, would enable him effectually to vindicate it, when done; and that those who detained me, when they had lost sight of their prey, would feel covered with confusion, and not dare to take another step in the affair.

The old man listened to what I related, with curiosity and interest. He said, that he had always felt an abhorrence to the sort of people who had me in their hands, that he had an aversion to the task they had just imposed upon him, but that he could not refuse some little disagreeable offices to oblige his daughter and son-in-law. He had no doubt, from my countenance and manner, of the truth of what

I had asserted to him. It was an extraordinary request I had made, and he did not know what had induced me to think him the sort of person to whom, with any prospect of success, it might be made. In reality however his habits of thinking were uncommon, and he felt more than half inclined to act as I desired. One thing at least he would ask of me in return, which was to be faithfully informed in some degree respecting the person he was desired to oblige. What was my name?

The question came upon me unprepared. But whatever might be the consequence, I could not bear to deceive the person by whom it was put, and in the circumstances under which it was put. The practice of perpetual falshood is too painful a task. I replied that my name was Williams.

He paused. His eye was fixed upon me. I saw his complexion alter at the

repetition of that word. He proceeded with visible anxiety.

My christian name?

Caleb.

Good God! it could not be ——? He conjured me by every thing that was sacred, to answer him faithfully to one question more. I was not?—no, it was impossible—the person who had formerly lived servant with Mr. Falkland of ——?

I told him that, whatever might be the meaning of his question, I would answer him truly. I was the individual he mentioned.

As I uttered these words, the old man rose from his seat. He was sorry that fortune had been so unpropitious to him, as for him ever to have set eyes upon me! I was a monster with whom the very earth groaned!

I intreated that he would suffer me to explain this new misapprehension, as he

had done in the former instance. I had no doubt that I should do it equally to his satisfaction.

No! no! no! he would upon no consideration admit, that his ears should suffer such contamination. This case and the other were very different. There was no criminal upon the face of the earth, no murderer, half so detestable, as the person who could prevail upon himself to utter the charges I had done, by way of recrimination, against so generous a master.—The old man was in a perfect agony with the recollection.

At length he calmed himself enough to say, he should never cease to grieve, that he had held a moment's parley with me. He did not know what was the conduct severe justice required of him; but, since he had come into the knowledge of who I was, only by my own confession, it was irreconcilably repugnant to his feelings, to make use of that knowledge to

my injury. Here therefore all relation between us ceased; as indeed it would be an abuse of words, to consider me in the light of a human creature. He would do me no mischief; but, on the other hand, he would not, for the world, be in any way assisting and abetting me.

I was inexpressibly affected at the abhorrence this good and benevolent crea ture expressed against me. I could not be silent; I endeavoured once and again to prevail upon him to hear me. But his determination was unalterable. Our contest lasted for some time, and he at length terminated it by ringing the bell, and calling up the waiter. A very little while after, my conductors entered, and the other persons withdrew.

It was a part of the singularity of my fate, that it hurried me from one species of anxiety and distress to another, too rapidly to suffer any one of them to sink deeply into my mind. I am apt to be-

lieve in the retrospect, that half the calamities I was destined to endure, would infallibly have overwhelmed and destroyed me. But, as it was, I had no leisure to chew the cud upon misfortunes as they befel me, but was under the necessity of forgetting them, to guard against peril that the next moment seemed ready to crush me.

The behaviour of this incomparable and amiable old man, cut me to the heart. It was a dreadful prognostic for all my future life. But, as I have just observed, my conductors entered, and another subject called imperiously upon my attention. I could have been content, mortified as I was at this instant, to have been shut up in some impenetrable solitude, and to have wrapped myself in inconsolable misery. But the grief I endured, had not such power over me, as that I could be content to risk the being led to the gallows. The love

of life, and still more a hatred against oppression, steeled my heart against that species of inertness. In the scene that had just passed, I had indulged, as I have said, in a wantonness and luxury of refinement. It was time that indulgence should be brought to a period. It was dangerous to trifle any more upon the brink of fate; and, penetrated as I was with sadness by the result of my last attempt, I was little disposed to unnecessary circumambulation.

I was exactly in the temper, in which the gentlemen who had me in their power would have desired to find me. Accordingly we entered immediately upon business; and, after some chaffering, they agreed to accept eleven guineas, as the price of my freedom. To preserve however the chariness of their reputation, they insisted upon conducting me with them for a few miles on the outside of a stage-coach. They then

pretended that the road they had to travel, lay in a cross country direction; and, having quitted the vehicle, they suffered me, almost as soon as it was out of sight, to shake off this troublesome association, and follow my own inclinations. It may be worth remarking by the way, that these fellows outwitted themselves at their own trade. They had laid hold of me at first, under the idea of a prize of a hundred guineas; they had since been glad to accept a composition of eleven; but, if they had retained me a little longer in their possession, they would have found the possibility of acquiring the sum that had originally excited their pursuit, upon a different score.

The mischances that had befallen me, in my late attempt to escape from my pursuers by sea, deterred me from the thought of repeating that experiment. I therefore once more returned to the

suggestion of hiding myself, at least for the present, amidst the crowds of the metropolis. Meanwhile, I by no means thought proper to venture by the direct route, and the less so, as that was the course which would be steered by my late conductors; but took my road along the borders of Wales. The only incident worth relating in this place, occurred in an attempt to cross the Severn in a particular point. The mode was by a ferry; but by some strange inadvertence I lost my way so completely, as to be wholly unable, that night, to reach the ferry, and arrive at the town which I had destined for my repose.

This may seem a petty disappointment, in the midst of the overwhelming considerations, that might have been expected to engross every thought of my mind. Yet it was borne by me with singular impatience. I was that day uncommonly fatigued. Previously to the

time that I mistook or at least was aware of the mistake of the road, the sky had become black and lowering, and soon after the clouds burst down in sheets of rain. I was in the midst of a heath, without a tree or covering of any sort to shelter me. I was thoroughly drenched in a moment. I pushed on with a sort of sullen determination. By and by the rain gave place to a storm of hail. The hail-stones were large and frequent. I was ill defended by the miserable covering I wore, and they seemed to cut me in a thousand directions. The hail-storm subsided, and was again succeeded by a heavy rain. By this time it was, that I had perceived I was wholly out of my road. I could discover neither man, nor beast, nor habitation of any kind. I walked on, measuring at every turn the path it would be proper to pursue, but in no instance finding a sufficient reason to reject one or prefer

another. My mind was bursting with depression and anguish. I muttered imprecations and murmuring, as I passed along. I was full of loathing and abhorrence of life, and all that life carries in its train. After wandering without any certain direction for two hours, I was overtaken by the night. The scene was nearly pathless, and it was vain to think of proceeding any farther.

Here I was, without comfort, without shelter, and without food. There was not a particle of my covering, that was not as wet as if it had been fished from the bottom of the ocean. My teeth chattered. I trembled in every limb. My heart burned with universal fury. At one moment I stumbled and fell over some unseen obstacle. At another I was turned back by an impediment I could not overcome.

There was no strict connection between these casual inconveniencies, and

the persecution under which I laboured. But my distempered thoughts confounded them together. I cursed the whole system of human existence. I said, Here I am, an outcast, destined to perish with hunger and cold. All men desert me. All men hate me. I am driven with mortal threats, from the sources of comfort and existence. Accursed world! that hates without a cause, that overwhelms innocence with calamities which ought to be spared even to guilt! Accursed world! dead to every manly sympathy; with eyes of horn, and hearts of steel! Why do I consent to live any longer? Why do I seek to drag on an existence, which, if protracted, must be protracted amidst the lairs of these human tigers?

This paroxysm at length exhausted itself. Presently after, I discovered a solitary shed, which I was contented to resort to for shelter. In a corner of the shed I

found some clean straw. I threw off my rags, placed them in a situation where they would best be dried, and buried myself amidst this friendly warmth. Here I forgot, by degrees, the anguish that had racked me. A wholesome shed and fresh straw may seem but scanty benefits; but they offered themselves when least expected, and my whole heart was lightened by the encounter. Through fatigue of mind and body, it happened in this instance, though in general my repose was remarkably short, that I slept till almost noon of the next day. When I rose, I found that I was at no great distance from the ferry, which I crossed, and entered the town where I intended to have rested the preceding night.

It was market-day. As I passed near the cross, I observed two people look at me with great earnestness: after which one of them exclaimed, I will be damned, if I do not think that is the very fellow

those men were enquiring for, who set off an hour ago by the coach for ———. I was extremely alarmed at this information; and, quickening my pace, turned sharp down a narrow lane. The moment I was out of sight, I ran with all the speed I could exert, and did not think myself safe, till I was several miles distant from the place where this information had reached my ears. I have always believed, that the men to whom it related, were the very persons who had apprehended me on board the ship in which I had embarked for Ireland; that, by some accident, they had met with the description of my person as published on the part of Mr. Falkland; and that, from putting together the circumstances, they had been led to believe that this was the very individual who had lately been in their custody. Indeed it was a piece of infatuation in me, for which I am now unable to account, that, after

the various indications which had occurred in that affair, proving to them that I was a man in critical and peculiar circumstances, I should have persisted in wearing the same disguise without the smallest alteration. My escape in the present case was eminently fortunate. If I had not lost my way in consequence of the hail-storm of the preceding night, or if I had not so greatly overslept myself this very morning, I must almost infallibly have fallen into the hands of these infernal blood-hunters.

The town they had chosen for their next stage, the name of which I had thus caught in the market-place, was the town to which, but for this intimation, I should have immediately proceeded. As it was, I determined to take a road as wide of it as possible. In the first place to which I came, in which it was practicable to do so, I bought a great coat, which I drew over my beggar's

weeds, and a better hat. The hat I slouched over my face, and covered one of my eyes with a green-silk shade. The handkerchief, which I had hitherto worn about my head, I now tied about the lower part of my visage, so as to cover my mouth. By degrees, I discarded every part of my former dress, and wore for my upper garment a kind of carman's frock, which, being of the better sort, made me look like the son of a reputable farmer of the lower class. Thus equipped, I proceeded on my journey, and, after a thousand alarms, precautions, and circuitous deviations from the direct path, arrived safely in London.

CHAP. VIII.

HERE then was the termination of an immense series of labours, upon which no man could have looked back without astonishment, or forward without a sentiment bordering on despair. It was at a price which defies estimation, that I had purchased this resting place; whether we consider the efforts it had cost me to escape from the walls of my prison, or the dangers and anxieties to which I had been a prey, from that hour to the present.

But why do I call the point at which I was now arrived a resting place? Alas, it was diametrically the reverse! It was my first and immediate business to review all the projects of disguise I had hitherto conceived, to derive every im-

provement I could invent from the practice to which I had been subjected, and to manufacture a veil of concealment more impenetrable than ever. This was an effort to which I could see no end. In ordinary cases the hue and cry after a supposed offender is a matter of temporary operation; but ordinary cases formed no standard for the colossal intelligence of Mr. Falkland. For the same reason, London, which appears an inexhaustible reservoir of concealment to the majority of mankind, brought no such consolatory sentiment to my mind. Whether life were worth accepting on such terms I cannot pronounce. I only know that I persisted in this exertion of my faculties, through a sort of parental love that men are accustomed to entertain for their intellectual offspring; the more thought I had expended in rearing it to its present perfection, the less did I find myself disposed to aban-

don it. Another motive, not less strenuously exciting me to perseverance, was the ever-growing repugnance I felt to injustice and arbitrary power.

The first evening of my arrival in town, I slept at an obscure inn in the borough of Southwark, choosing that side of the metropolis, on account of its lying entirely wide of the part of England from which I came. I entered the inn in the evening in my countryman's frock; and, having paid for my lodging before I went to bed, equipped myself next morning as differently as my wardrobe would allow, and left the house before day. The frock I made up into a small packet; and, having carried it to a distance as great as I thought necessary, I dropped it in the corner of an alley through which I passed. My next care was to furnish myself with another suit of apparel, totally different from any to which I had hitherto had recourse. The exterior which I was now

induced to assume was that of a Jew. One of the gang of thieves upon —— forest, had been of that race; and, by the talent of mimicry, which I have already stated myself to possess, I could copy their pronunciation of the English language, sufficiently to answer such occasions as were likely to present themselves. One of the preliminaries I adopted, was to repair to a quarter of the town in which great numbers of this people reside, and study their complexion and countenance. Having made such provision as my prudence suggested to me, I retired for that night, to an inn in the mid way between Mile-End and Wapping. Here I accoutred myself in my new habiliments; and, having employed the same precautions as before, retired from my lodging at a time least exposed to observation. It is unnecessary to describe the particulars of my new equipage. Suffice it to say, that one of my cares

was to discolour my complexion, and give it the dun and sallow hue which is in most instances characteristic of the tribe to which I assumed to belong; and that when my metamorphosis was finished, I could not upon the strictest examination conceive, that any one could have traced out the person of Caleb Williams in this new disguise.

Thus far advanced in the execution of my project, I deemed it advisable to procure a lodging, and change my late wandering life for a stationary one. In this lodging I constantly secluded myself from the rising to the setting of the sun; the periods I allowed for exercise and air were few, and those few by night. I was even cautious of so much as approaching the window of my apartment, though upon the attic story; a principle I laid down to myself, was, not wantonly and unnecessarily to expose myself to risk, however slight that risk might appear.

Here let me pause for a moment, to bring before the reader, in the way in which it was impressed upon my mind, the nature of my situation. I was born free: I was born healthy, vigorous and active, complete in all the lineaments and members of a human body. I was not born indeed to the possession of hereditary wealth; but I had a better inheritance, an enterprising mind, an inquisitive spirit, a liberal ambition. In a word, I accepted my lot with willingness and content; I did not fear but I should make my cause good in the lists of existence. I was satisfied to aim at small things; I was pleased to play at first for a slender stake; I was more willing to grow, than to descend, in my individual significance.

The free spirit and the firm heart with which I commenced, one circumstance was sufficient to blast. I was ignorant of the power which the institutions of so-

ciety give to one man over others; I had fallen unwarily into the hands of a person, who held it as his fondest wish, to oppress and destroy me.

I found myself subjected, undeservedly on my part, to all the disadvantages which mankind, if they reflected upon them, would hesitate to impose on acknowledged guilt. In every human countenance I feared to find the countenance of an enemy. I shrunk from the vigilance of every human eye. I dared not open my heart to the best affections of our nature. I was shut up a deserted, solitary wretch in the midst of my species. I dared not look for the consolations of friendship; but, instead of seeking to identify myself with the joys and sorrows of others, and exchanging the delicious gifts of confidence and sympathy, was compelled to centre my thoughts and my vigilance in myself. My life was all a lie. I had a counter-

feit character to support. I had counterfeit manners to assume. My gait, my gestures, my accents were all of them to be studied. I was not free to indulge, no not one, honest sally of the soul. Attended with these disadvantages, I was to procure myself a subsistence, a subsistence, to be acquired with infinite precautions, and to be consumed without the hope of enjoyment.

This, even this, I was determined to endure; to put my shoulder to the burthen, and support it with unshrinking firmness. Let it not however be supposed, that I endured it without repining and abhorrence. My time was divided, between the terrors of an animal that skulks from its pursuers, the obstinacy of unshrinking firmness, and that elastic revulsion that from time to time seems to shrivel the very hearts of the miserable. If at some moments I fiercely defied all the rigours of my fate, at

others, and those of frequent recurrence, I sunk into helpless despondence, I looked forward without hope through the series of my existence, tears of anguish rushed from my eyes, my courage became extinct, and I cursed the conscious life that was reproduced with every returning day.

Why, upon such occasions I was accustomed to exclaim,—why am I overwhelmed with the load of existence? Why are all these engines at work to torment me? I am no murderer; yet, if I were, what worse could I be fated to suffer? How vile, squalid and disgraceful is the state to which I am condemned? This is not my place in the roll of existence, the place for which either my temper or my understanding has prepared me! To what purpose serve the restless aspirations of my soul, but to make me, like a frighted bird, beat myself in vain against the inclosure of my

cage? Nature, barbarous nature, to me thou hast proved indeed the worst of step-mothers; endowed me with wishes insatiate, and sunk me in never-ending degradation.

I might have thought myself more secure if I had been in possession of money upon which to subsist. The necessity of earning for myself the means of existence, evidently tended to thwart the plan of secrecy to which I was condemned. Whatever labour I adopted, or deemed myself qualified to discharge, it was first to be considered how I was to be provided with employment, and where I was to find an employer or purchaser for my commodities. In the mean time I had no alternative. The little money with which I had escaped from the blood-hunters, was almost expended.

After the minutest consideration I was able to bestow upon this question, I determined that literature should be the

field of my first experiment. I had read of money being acquired in this way, and of prices given by the speculators in this sort of ware to its proper manufacturers. My qualifications I estimated at a slender valuation. I was not without a conviction, that experience and practice must pave the way to excellent production. But, though of these I was utterly destitute, my propensities had always led me in this direction; and my early thirst of knowledge, had conducted me to a more intimate acquaintance with books, than could perhaps have been expected under my circumstances. If my literary pretensions were slight, the demand I intended to make upon them, was not great. All I asked was a subsistence, and I was persuaded few persons could subsist upon slenderer means than myself. I also considered this as a temporary expedient, and hoped that accident or time might hereafter place me in a less preca-

rious situation. The reasons that principally determined my choice, were, that this employment called upon me for the least preparation, and could, as I thought, be exercised with least observation.

There was a solitary woman of middle age, who tenanted a chamber in this house, upon the same floor with my own. I had no sooner determined upon the destination of my industry, than I cast my eye upon her as the possible instrument for disposing of my productions. Excluded as I was from all intercourse with my species in general, I found pleasure in the occasional exchange of a few words, with this inoffensive and good-humoured creature, who was already of an age to preclude scandal. She lived upon a very small annuity, allowed her by a distant relation, a woman of quality, who, possessed of thousands herself, had no other anxiety with respect to this person, than that she should not contaminate her al-

liance by the exertion of honest industry. This humble creature was of a uniformly cheerful and active disposition, unacquainted alike with the cares of wealth, and the pressure of misfortune. Though her pretensions were small, and her information slender, she was by no means deficient in penetration. She remarked the faults and follies of mankind with no contemptible discernment; but her temper was of so mild and forgiving a cast, as would have induced most persons to believe, that she perceived nothing of the matter. Her heart overflowed with the milk of kindness. She was sincere and ardent in her attachments, and never did she omit a service, which she perceived herself able to render, to a human being.

Had it not been for these qualifications of temper, I should probably have found that my appearance, that of a deserted, solitary lad of Jewish extrac-

tion, effectually precluded my demands upon her kindness. But I speedily perceived, from her manner of receiving and returning civilities of an indifferent sort, that her heart was too noble, to have its effusions checked by any base and unworthy considerations. Encouraged by these preliminaries, I determined to select her as my agent. I found her willing and alert in the business I proposed to her. That I might anticipate occasions of suspicion, I frankly told her that, for reasons which I wished to be excused from relating, but which, if related, I was sure would not deprive me of her good opinion, I found it necessary, for the present, to keep myself private. With this statement she readily acquiesced, and told me that she had no desire for any further information, than I found it expedient to give.

My first productions were of the poetical kind. After having finished two or

three, I directed this generous creature to take them to the office of a newspaper; but they were rejected with contempt by the Aristarchus of that place, who, having bestowed on them a superficial glance, told her that such matters were not in his way. I cannot help mentioning in this place, that the countenance of Mrs. Marney (that was the name of my ambassadress) was in all cases a perfect indication of her success, and rendered explanation by words wholly unnecessary. She interested herself so unreservedly in what she undertook, that she felt either miscarriage or good fortune, much more exquisitely than I did. I had an unhésitating confidence in my own resources, and, occupied as I was in meditations more interesting and more painful, I regarded these matters as altogether trivial.

I quietly took the pieces back, and laid them upon my table. Upon revisal

I altered and transcribed one of them, and joining it with two others, dispatched them together to the editor of a magazine. He desired they might be left with him till the day after to-morrow. When that day came, he told my friend they should be inserted; but, Mrs. Marney asking respecting the price, he replied, it was their constant rule to give nothing for poetical compositions, the letter-box being always full of writings of that sort; but, if the gentleman would try his hand in prose, a short essay or a tale, he would see what he could do for him.

With the requisition of my literary dictator I immediately complied. I attempted a paper in the style of Addison's Spectators, which was accepted. In a short time I was upon an established footing in this quarter. I however distrusted my resources in the way of moral disquisition, and soon turned my thoughts to his other suggestion, a tale. His de-

mands upon me were now frequent, and, to facilitate my labour, I bethought myself of the resource of translation. I had scarcely any convenience with respect to the procuring of books; but, as my memory was retentive, I frequently translated or modelled my narratives upon a reading of some years before. By a fatality for which I do not exactly know how to account, my thoughts frequently led me to the histories of celebrated robbers; and I retailed from time to time incidents and anecdotes of Cartouche, Gusman d'Alfarache and other memorable worthies, whose career was terminated upon the gallows or the scaffold.

In the mean time a retrospect to my own situation, rendered a perseverance even in this industry, difficult to be maintained. I often threw down my pen in an ecstacy of despair. Sometimes, for whole days together I was incapable of action, and sunk into a sort of partial

stupor too wretched to be described. Youth and health however enabled me, from time to time, to get the better of my dejection; and to rouse myself to something like a gaiety, which, if it had been permanent, might have made this interval of my story tolerable to my reflections.

SARASWATI MAHAL

MAHARAJA SERFOJI SARASWATI MAHAL LIBRARY

CHAP. IX.

While I was thus endeavouring to occupy and provide for the intermediate period, till the violence of the pursuit after me might be abated, a new source of danger opened upon me, of which I had no previous suspicion.

Gines, the thief who had been expelled from captain Raymond's gang, had fluctuated during the last years of his life, between the two professions, of a violator of the laws, and a retainer to their administration. He had originally devoted himself to the first, and probably his initiation in the mysteries of thieving, qualified him to be peculiarly expert in the profession of a thief-taker, a profession he had adopted, not from choice, but necessity. In this employ-

ment his reputation was great, though perhaps not equal to his merits; for it happens here, as in other departments of human society, that, however the subalterns may furnish wisdom and skill, the principals exclusively possess the eclat. He was exercising this art in a very prosperous manner, when it happened, by some accident, that one or two of his achievements, previous to his having shaken off the dregs of unlicensed depredation, were in danger of becoming subjects of public attention. Having had repeated intimations of this, he thought it prudent to decamp, and it was during this period of his retreat, that he entered into the —— gang.

Such was the history of this man, antecedently to his being placed in the situation in which I had first encountered him. At the time of that encounter he was a veteran of captain Raymond's gang; for, thieves being a short-lived

race, the character of veteran costs the less time in acquiring. Upon his expulsion from this community, he returned once more to his lawful profession, and by his old comrades was received with congratulation, as a lost sheep. In the vulgar classes of society no length of time is sufficient to expiate a crime; but, among the honourable fraternity of thief-takers, it is a rule, never to bring one of their own brethren to a reckoning, when it can with any decency be avoided. They are probably reluctant to fix an unnecessary stain upon the ermine of their profession. Another rule, observed by those who have passed through the same gradations as Gines had done, and which was adopted by Gines himself, is always to reserve such as have been the accomplices of their depredations to the last, and on no account to assail them, without great necessity, or powerful temptation. For this reason, according to

Gines's system of tactics, captain Raymond and his confederates were, as he would have termed it, safe from his retaliation.

But, though Gines was, in this sense of the term, a man of strict honour, my case unfortunately did not fall within the laws of honour he acknowledged. Misfortune had overtaken me, and I was on all sides without protection or shelter. The persecution to which I was exposed, was founded upon the supposition of my having committed felony to an immense amount. But in this Gines had had no participation; he was careless whether the supposition were true or false, and hated me as much, as if my innocence had been established beyond the reach of suspicion.

The blood-hunters who had taken me into custody at ——, related, as usual among their fraternity, a part of their adventure, and told of the rea-

son which inclined them to suppose, that the individual who had passed through their custody, was the very Caleb Williams for whose apprehension a reward had been offered of a hundred guineas. Gines, whose acuteness was eminent in the way of his profession, by comparing facts and dates, was induced to suspect in his own mind, that Caleb Williams was the person he had hustled and wounded upon —— forest. Against that person he entertained the bitterest aversion. I had been the innocent occasion of his being expelled with disgrace from captain Raymond's gang; and Gines, as I afterwards understood, was intimately persuaded that there was no comparison, between the liberal and manly profession of a robber, from which I had driven him, and the sordid and mechanical occupation of a blood-hunter, to which he was obliged to return. He no sooner received the information I

have mentioned, than he vowed revenge. He determined to leave all other objects, and consecrate every faculty of his mind to the unkenneling me from my hiding-place. The offered reward, which his vanity made him consider as assuredly his own, appeared as the complete indemnification of his labour and expense. Thus I had to encounter the sagacity he possessed in the way of his profession, whetted and stimulated by a sentiment of vengeance, in a mind that knew no restraint from conscience or humanity.

When I drew to myself a picture of my situation soon after having fixed on my present abode, I foolishly thought, as the unhappy are accustomed to do, that my calamity would admit of no aggravation. The aggravation which, unknown to me, at this time occurred, was the most fearful that any imagination could have devised. Nothing could have

happened more critically hostile to my future peace, than my fatal encounter with Gines upon —— forest. By this means, as it now appears, I had fastened upon myself a second enemy, of that singular and dreadful sort, that is determined never to dismiss its animosity as long as life shall endure. While Falkland was the hungry lion whose roarings astonished and appalled me, Gines was a noxious insect, scarcely less formidable and tremendous, that hovered about my goings, and perpetually menaced me with the poison of his sting.

The first step pursued by him in execution of his project, was to set out for the sea-port town where I had formerly been apprehended. From thence he traced me to the banks of the Severn, and from the banks of the Severn to London. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this is always practicable, provided the pursuer have motives strong

enough to excite him to perseverance, unless the precautions of the fugitive be in the highest degree, both judicious in the conception, and fortunate in the execution. Gines indeed, in the course of his pursuit, was often obliged to double his steps; and, like the harrier, whenever he was at a fault, return to the place where he had last perceived the scent of the animal whose death he had decreed. He spared neither pains nor time in the gratification of the passion, which choice had made his ruling one.

Upon my arrival in town he for a moment lost all trace of me, London being a place in which, on account of the magnitude of its dimensions, it might well be supposed that an individual could remain hidden and unknown. But no difficulty could discourage this new adversary. He went from inn to inn (reasonably supposing that there was no private house to which I could immediately repair), till he

found, by the description he gave, and the recollections he excited, that I had slept for one night in the borough of Southwark. But he could get no further information. The people of the inn had no knowledge what had become of me the next morning.

This however did but render him more eager in his pursuit. The describing me was now more difficult, on account of the partial change of dress I had made the second day of my being in town. But Gines at length overcame the obstacle from that quarter.

Having traced me to my second inn, he was here furnished with a more copious information. I had been a subject of speculation for the leisure hours of some of the persons belonging to this inn. An old woman of a most curious and loquacious disposition who lived opposite to it, and who that morning rose early to her washing, had espied me from

her window, by the light of a large lamp which hung over the inn, as I issued from the gate. She had but a very imperfect view of me, but she thought there was something Jewish in my appearance. She was accustomed to hold a conference every morning with the landlady of the inn, some of the waiters and chambermaids occasionally assisting at it. In the course of the dialogue of this morning, she asked some questions about the Jew who had slept there the night before. No Jew had slept there. The curiosity of the landlady was excited in her turn. By the time of the morning it could be no one but me. It was very strange! They compared notes respecting my appearance and dress. No two things could be more dissimilar. The Jew Christian, upon any dearth of subjects of intelligence, repeatedly furnished matter for their discourse.

The information thus afforded to Gines,

appeared exceedingly material. But the performance did not, for some time, keep pace with the promise. He could not enter every private house into which lodgers were ever admitted, in the same manner that he had treated the inns. He walked the streets, and examined with a curious and inquisitive eye the countenance of every Jew about my stature; but in vain. He repaired to Duke's place and the synagogues. It was not here that in reality he could calculate upon finding me; but he resorted to these means, in despair, and as a last hope. He was more than once upon the point of giving up the pursuit; but he was recalled to it by an insatiable and restless appetite for revenge.

It was during this perturbed and fluctuating state of his mind, that he chanced to pay a visit to a brother of his, who was the head-workman of a printing-office. There was little intercourse between these two persons, their dispositions and habits

of life being extremely dissimilar. The printer was industrious, sober, inclined to methodism, and of a propensity to accumulation. He was extremely dissatisfied with the character and pursuits of his brother, and had made some ineffectual attempts to reclaim him. But, though they by no means agreed in their habits of thinking, they sometimes saw each other. Gines loved to boast of as many of his achievements as he dared venture to mention; and his brother was one more hearer, in addition to the set of his usual associates. The printer was amused with the blunt sagacity of remark, and novelty of incident, that characterised Gines's conversation. He was secretly pleased, in spite of all his sober and church-going prejudices, that he was brother to a man of so much ingenuity and fortitude.

After having listened for some time upon this occasion, to the wonderful sto-

ries which Gines, in his rugged way, condescended to tell, the printer felt an ambition to entertain his brother in his turn. He began to retail some of my stories of Cartouche and Gusman d'Alfarache. The attention of Gines was excited. His first emotion was wonder; his second was envy and aversion. Where did the printer get these stories? This question was answered. I will tell you what, said the printer, we none of us know what to make of the writer of these articles. He writes poetry and morality and history: I am a printer, and corrector of the press, and may pretend without vanity to be a tolerably good judge of these matters: he writes them all to my mind extremely fine, and yet he is no more than a Jew. [To my honest printer this seemed as strange, as if they had been written by a Cherokee chieftain at the falls of the Missisippi.]

A Jew! How do you know? Did you ever see him?

No; the matter is always brought to us by a woman. But my master hates mysteries; he likes to see his authors himself. So he plagues and plagues the old woman; but he can never get any thing out of her, except that one day she happened to drop that the young gentleman was a Jew.

A Jew! a young gentleman! a person who did every thing by proxy, and made a secret of all his motions! Here was abundant matter for the speculations and suspicions of Gines. He was confirmed in them, without adverting to the process of his own mind, by the subject of my lucubrations, men who died by the hands of the executioner. He said little more to his brother, except asking, as if casually, what sort of an old woman this was? of what age she might be? and

whether she often brought him materials of this kind? and soon after took occasion to leave him.

It was with vast pleasure that Gines had listened to this unhoped-for information. Having collected from his brother sufficient hints relative to the person and appearance of Mrs. Marney, and understanding that he expected to receive something from me the next day, Gines took his stand in the street early, that he might not risk miscarriage by negligence. He waited several hours, but not without success. Mrs. Marney came; he watched her into the house; and, after about twenty minutes delay, saw her return. He dogged her from street to street; observed her finally enter the door of a private house; and congratulated himself upon having at length arrived at the consummation of his labours.

The house she entered was not her own habitation. By a sort of miraculous ac-

cident she had observed Gines following her in the street. As she went home, she saw a woman who had fallen down in a fainting fit. Moved by the compassion that was ever alive in her, she approached her, in order to render her assistance. Presently a crowd collected round them. Mrs. Marney, having done what she was able, once more proceeded homewards. Observing the crowd round her, the idea of pick-pockets occurred to her mind; she put her hands to her sides, and at the same time looked round upon the populace. She had left the circle somewhat abruptly; and Gines, who had been obliged to come nearer, lest he should lose her in the confusion, was at that moment standing exactly opposite to her. His visage was of the most extraordinary kind; habit had written the characters of malignant cunning, and dauntless effrontery, in every line of his face; and Mrs. Marney, who was neither philoso-

pher nor physiognomist, was nevertheless struck. This good woman, like most persons of her notable character, had a peculiar way of going home, not through the open streets, but by narrow lanes and alleys, with intricate insertions and sudden turnings. In one of these, by some accident, she once again caught a glance of her pursuer. This circumstance, together with the singularity of his appearance, awakened her conjectures. Could he be following her? It was the middle of the day, and she could have no fears for herself. But could this circumstance have any reference to me? She recollected the precautions and secrecy I practised, and had no doubt that I had reasons for what I did. She recollected that she had always been upon her guard respecting me; but had she been sufficiently so? She thought that, if she should be the means of any mischief to me, she should be miserable for ever. She determined therefore, by way of pre-

caution in case of the worst, to call at a friend's house, and send me word of what had occurred. Having instructed her friend, she went out immediately upon a visit to a person in the exactly opposite direction, and desired her friend to proceed upon the errand to me, five minutes after she left the house. By this prudence she completely extricated me from the present danger.

Meantime the intelligence that was brought me by no means ascertained the greatness of the peril. For any thing I could discover in it, the circumstance might be perfectly innocent, and the fear solely proceed from the over-caution and kindness of this benevolent and excellent woman. Yet such was the misery of my situation, I had no choice. For this menace or no menace, I was obliged to desert my habitation at a minute's warning, taking with me nothing but what I could carry in my hand; to see my generous benefactress no more; to quit my

little arrangements and provision; and to seek once again, in some forlorn retreat, new projects, and, if of that I could have any rational hope, a new friend. I descended into the street with a heavy, not an irresolute heart. It was broad day. I said, Persons are at this moment supposed to be roaming the street in search of me: I must not trust to the chance of their pursuing one direction, and I another. I traversed half a dozen streets, and then dropped into an obscure house of entertainment for persons of small expence. In this house I took some refreshment, passed several hours of active, but melancholy thinking, and at last procured a bed. As soon however as it was dark, I went out (for this was indispensible) to purchase the materials of a new disguise. Having adjusted it as well as I could during the night, I left this asylum, with the same precautions that I had employed in former instances.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. X.

I PROCURED a new lodging. By some bias of the mind, it may be, gratifying itself with images of peril, I inclined to believe that Mrs. Marneys's alarm had not been without foundation. I was however unable to conjecture through what means danger had approached me; and had therefore only the unsatisfactory remedy of redoubling my watch upon all my actions. Still I had the joint considerations pressing upon me, of security and subsistence. I had some small remains of the produce of my former industry; but this was but small, for my employer was in arrear with me, and I did not choose in any method to apply to him for payment. The anxieties of my mind, in spite of all my struggles, preyed

upon my health. I did not consider myself as in safety for an instant. My appearance was wasted to a shadow; and I started at every sound that was unexpected. Sometimes I was half tempted to resign myself into the hands of the law, and brave its worst; but resentment and indignation at those times speedily flowed back upon my mind, and re-animated my perseverance.

I knew no better resource with respect to subsistence, than that I had employed in the former instance, of seeking some third person to stand between me and the disposal of my industry. I might find an individual ready to undertake this office in my behalf, but where should I find the benevolent soul of Mrs. Marney? The person I fixed upon was a Mr. Spurrel, a man who took in work from the watch-makers, and had an apartment upon our second floor. I examined him two or three times with irresolute glances,

as we passed upon the stairs, before I would venture to accost him. He observed this, and at length kindly invited me into his apartment.

Being seated, he condoled with me upon my seeming bad health, and the solitary mode of my living, and wished to know whether he could be of any service to me. "From the first moment he saw me, he had conceived an affection for me." In my present disguise I appeared twisted and deformed, and in other respects by no means an object of attraction. But it seemed, Mr. Spurrel had lost an only son about six months before, and I was "the very picture of him." If I had put off my counterfeited ugliness, I should probably have lost all hold upon his affections. "He was now an old man," as he observed, "just dropping into the grave; and his son had been his only consolation. The poor lad was always ailing, but he had been a nurse to him; and, the

more tending he required while he was alive, the more he missed him now he was dead. Now he had not a friend, nor any body that cared for him in the whole world. If I pleased, I should be instead of that son to him, and he would treat me in all respects with the same attention and kindness."

I expressed my sense of these benevolent offers; but told him that I should be sorry to be in any way burthensome to him. "My ideas at present led me to a private and solitary life, and my chief difficulty was to reconcile this with some mode of earning necessary subsistence. If he would condescend to lend me his assistance in smoothing this difficulty, it would be the greatest benefit he could confer on me." I added, that my mind had always had a mechanical and industrious turn, and that I did not doubt of soon mastering any craft to which I seriously applied myself. "I had not been brought

up to any trade; but, if he would favour me with his instructions, I would work with him as long as he pleased for a bare subsistence. I knew that I was asking of him an extraordinary kindness, but I was urged on the one hand by the most extreme necessity, and encouraged on the other by the persuasiveness of his friendly professions."

The old man dropped some tears over my apparent distress, and readily consented to every thing I proposed. Our agreement was soon made, and I entered upon my functions accordingly. My new friend was a man of a singular turn of mind. Love of money, and a charitable officiousness of demeanour, were his leading characteristics. He lived in the most penurious manner, and denied himself every indulgence I entitled myself almost immediately, as he frankly acknowledged, to some remuneration for my labours, and accordingly he insisted

upon my being paid. He did not however, as some persons would have done under the circumstances, pay me the whole amount of my earnings, but professed to subtract from them twenty per cent, as an equitable consideration, for instrúction, and commission-money in procuring me a channel for my industry. Yet he frequently shed tears over me, was uneasy in every moment of our indispensable separation, and exhibited perpetual tokens of attachment and fondness. I found him a man of excellent mechanical contrivance, and received considerable pleasure from his communications. My own sources of information were various; and he frequently expressed his wonder and delight in the contemplation of my powers, as well of amusement, as exertion.

Thus I appeared to have attained a situation, not less eligible, than in my connection with Mrs. Marney. I was how-

ever still more unhappy. My fits of despondence were deeper, and of more frequent recurrence. My health every day grew worse; and Mr. Spurrel was not without apprehensions, that he should lose me, as he before lost his only son.

I had not been long however in this new situation, before an incident occurred, which filled me with greater alarm and apprehension than ever. I was walking out one evening, after a long visitation of languor, for an hour's exercise and air, when my ear was struck with two or three casual sounds from the mouth of a hawker who was bawling his wares. I stood still to inform myself more exactly, when, to my utter astonishment and confusion, I heard him deliver himself nearly in these words. "*Here you have the* MOST WONDERFUL AND SURPRISING HISTORY, AND MIRACULOUS ADVENTURES OF CALEB WILLIAMS: *you are informed how he first robbed, and then brought false ac-*

cusations against his master; as also of his attempting divers times to break out of prison, till at last he effected his escape in the most wonderful and uncredible manner; as also of his travelling the kingdom in various disguises, and the robberies he committed with a most desperate and daring gang of thieves; and of his coming up to London, where it is supposed he now lies concealed; with a true and faithful copy of the hue and cry printed and published by one of his Majesty's most principal secretaries of state, offering a reward of one hundred guineas for apprehending him. All for the price of one halfpenny.

Petrified as I was at these amazing and dreadful sounds, I had the temerity to go up to the man and purchase one of his papers. I was desperately resolved to know the exact state of the fact, and what I had to depend upon. I carried it with me a little way, till, no longer able to endure the tumult of my impatience, I

contrived to make out the chief part of its contents, by the help of a lamp, at the upper end of a narrow passage. I found it contain a greater number of circumstances, than could have been expected in this species of publication. I was equalled to the most notorious house-breaker in the art of penetrating through walls and doors, and to the most accomplished swindler in plausibleness, duplicity and disguise. The hand-bill which Larkins had first brought to us upon the forest, was printed at length. All my disguises, previously to the last alarm that had been given me by the providence of Mrs. Marney, were faithfully enumerated; and the public were warned to be upon their watch against a person of an uncouth and extraordinary appearance, and who lived in a recluse and solitary manner. I also learned from this paper that my former lodgings had been searched on the very evening of my escape,

and that Mrs. Marney had been sent to Newgate, upon a charge of misprision of felony.—This last circumstance affected me deeply. In the midst of my own sufferings, my sympathies flowed undiminished. It was a most cruel and intolerable idea, if I were not only myself to be an object of unrelenting persecution, but my very touch were to be infectious, and every one that succoured me was to be involved in the common ruin. My instant feeling was that of a willingness to undergo the utmost malice of my enemies, could I by that means have saved this excellent woman from alarm and peril.—I afterwards learned that Mrs. Marney was delivered from confinement, by the interposition of her noble relation.

My sympathy for Mrs. Marney however was at this moment a transient one. A more imperious and irresistible consideration demanded to be heard.

With what sensations did I ruminate

upon this paper? Every word of it carried despair to my heart. The actual apprehension that I dreaded, would perhaps have been less horrible. It would have put an end to that lingering terror to which I was a prey. Disguise was no longer of use. A numerous class of individuals, through every department, almost every house of the metropolis, would be induced to look with a suspicious eye upon every stranger, especially every solitary stranger, that fell under their observation. The prize of one hundred guineas was held out to excite their avarice, and sharpen their penetration. It was no longer Bow-street, it was a million of men, in arms against me. Neither had I the refuge, which few men have been so miserable as to want, of one single individual with whom to repose my alarms, and who might shelter me from the gaze of indiscriminate curiosity.

What could exceed the horrors of this

situation? My heart knocked against my ribs, my bosom heaved, I gasped and panted for breath. There is no end then, said I, to my persecutors! My unwearied and long continued labours lead to no termination! Termination! No! the lapse of time, that cures all other things, makes my case more desperate! Why then, exclaimed I, a new train of thought suddenly rushing into my mind,—Why should I sustain the contest any longer? I can at least elude my persecutors in death. I can bury myself, and the traces of my existence together, in friendly oblivion; and thus bequeath eternal doubt, and ever new alarm, to those who have no peace but in pursuing me!

In the midst of the horrors with which I was now impressed, this idea gave me pleasure, and I hastened to the Thames to put it in instant execution. Such was the paroxysm of my mind, that my powers of vision became partially sus-

pended. I was no longer conscious to the feebleness of disease, but rushed along with fervent impetuosity. I passed from street to street, without observing what direction I pursued. After wandering I know not how long, I arrived at London-Bridge. I hastened to the stairs, and saw the river covered with vessels.

No human being must see me, said I, at the instant that I vanish for ever.—This thought required some consideration. A portion of time had elapsed since my first desperate purpose. My understanding began to return. The sight of the vessels suggested to me the idea of once more attempting to leave my native country.

I enquired, and speedily found that the cheapest passage I could procure, was in a vessel moored near the Tower, and which was to sail in a few days for Middleburg in Holland. I would have gone instantly on board, and have endeavoured

to prevail with the captain to let me remain there till he sailed; but unfortunately I had not money enough in my pocket to defray my passage.

It was worse than this. I had not money enough in the world. I however paid the captain half his demand, and promised to return with the rest. I knew not in what manner it was to be procured, but I believed that I should not fail in it. I had some idea of applying to Mr. Spurrel. Surely he would not refuse me? He appeared to love me with parental affection, and I thought I might trust myself for a moment in his hands.

I approached my place of residence with a heavy and foreboding heart. Mr. Spurrel was not at home; and I was obliged to wait for his return. Worn out with fatigue, disappointment, and the ill state of my health, I sunk upon a chair. Speedily however I recollected myself. I had work of Mr. Spurrel's in

my trunk, which had been delivered out to me that very morning, to five times the amount I wanted. I canvassed for a moment, whether I should make use of this property as if it were my own; but I rejected the idea with disdain. I had never in the smallest degree merited the reproaches that were cast upon me; and I determined I never would merit them. I sat gasping, anxious, full of the blackest forebodings. My terrors appeared, even to my own mind, greater and more importunate than the circumstances authorised.

It was extraordinary that Mr. Spurrel should be abroad at this hour; I had never known it happen before. His bed-time was between nine and ten. Ten o'clock came, eleven o'clock, but not Mr. Spurrel. At midnight I heard his knock at the door. Every soul in the house was in bed. Mr. Spurrel, on account of his regular hours, was unpro-

vided with a key to open for himself. A gleam, a sickly gleam! of the social spirit, came over my heart. I flew nimbly down stairs, and opened the door.

I could perceive, by the little taper in my hand, something extraordinary in his countenance. I had not time to speak, before I saw two other men follow him. At the first glance I was sufficiently assured what sort of persons they were. At the second, I perceived that one of them was no other than Gines himself. I had understood formerly that he had been of this profession, and I was not surprised to find him in it again. Though I had for three hours endeavoured, as it were, to prepare myself, for the unavoidable necessity of falling once again into the hands of the officers of law, the sensation I felt at their entrance was indescribably agonizing. I was beside not a little astonished at the time and manner of their entrance; and I felt anxious to know

whether Mr. Spurrel could be base enough to have been their introducer.

I was not long held in perplexity. He no sooner saw his followers within the door, than he exclaimed with convulsive eagerness, There, there, that is your man! thank God! thank God! Gines looked eagerly in my face, with a countenance expressive alternately of hope and doubt, and answered, By God, and I do not know whether it be or no! I am afraid we are in the wrong box! Then recollecting himself, We will go into the house, and examine further however. We all went up stairs into Mr. Spurrel's room; I set down the candle upon the table. I had hitherto been silent; but I determined not to desert myself, and was a little encouraged to exertion by the scepticism of Gines. With a calm and deliberate manner therefore, in my feigned voice, one of the characteristics of which was lisping, I asked, Pray, gen-

tlemen, what may be your pleasure with me? Why, said Gines, our errand is with one Caleb Williams, and a precious rascal he is! I ought to know the chap well enough; but they say he has as many faces as there are days in the year. So you please to pull off your face; or if you cannot do that, at least you can pull off your clothes, and let us see what your hump is made of.

I remonstrated, but in vain. I stood detected in part of my artifice; and Gines, though still uncertain, was every moment more and more confirmed in his suspicions. Mr. Spurrel perfectly gloted, with eyes that seemed ready to devour every thing that passed. As my imposture gradually appeared more palpable, he repeated his exclamation, Thank God! thank God! At last, tired with this scene of mummery, and disgusted beyond measure with the base and hypocritical figure I seemed to exhibit, I exclaimed, Well,

I am Caleb Williams; conduct me whereever you please! And now, Mr. Spurrel——! He gave a violent start. The instant I declared myself his transport had been at the highest, and was, to any power he was able to exert, absolutely uncontrolable. But the unexpectedness of my address, and the tone in which I spoke, electrified him.——Is it possible, continued I, that you should have been the wretch to betray me? What have I done to deserve this treatment? Is this the kindness you professed? the affection that was perpetually in your mouth? to be the death of me!

My poor boy! my dear creature! cried Spurrel, whimpering, and in a tone of the humblest expostulation, indeed I could not help it! I would have helped it if I could! I hope they will not hurt my darling! I am sure, I shall die if they do!

Miserable driveller! interrupted I,

with a stern voice, do you betray me into the remorseless fangs of the law, and then talk of my not being hurt? I know my sentence, and am prepared to meet it! You have fixed the halter upon my neck, and at the same price would have done so to your only son! Go, count your accursed guineas! My life would have been safer in the hands of one I had never seen, than in yours, whose mouth and whose eyes for ever ran over with crocodile affection!

I have always believed that my sickness, and, as he apprehended, approaching death, contributed its part to the treachery of Mr. Spurrel. He predicted to his own mind the time when I should no longer be able to work. He recollected with agony the expence that attended his son's illness and death. He was determined to afford me no assistance, of a similar kind. He feared however the reproach of deserting me. He feared

the tenderness of his nature. He felt, that I was growing upon his affections, and that, in a short time, he could not have deserted me. He was driven by a sort of implicit impulse, for the sake of avoiding one ungenerous action, to take refuge in another, the basest and most diabolical. This motive, conjoining with the prospect of the proffered reward, was an incitement too powerful for him to resist.

THE TANJORE M... SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. XI.

Having given vent to my resentment, I left Mr. Spurrel, motionless, and unable to utter a word. Gines and his companion attended me. It is unnecessary to repeat all the insolence of this man. He alternately triumphed in the completion of his revenge, and regretted the loss of the reward to the shrivelled old curmudgeon we had just quitted, whom however he swore he would cheat of it by one means or another. He claimed to himself the ingenuity of having devised the halfpenny legend, the thought of which was all his own, and was an expedient that was impossible to fail. There was neither law nor justice, he said, to be had, if Hunks, who had done nothing, were permitted to pocket

the cash, and his merit were left undistinguished and pennyless.

I paid but little attention to his story. It struck upon my sense, and I was able to recollect it at my nearest leisure, though I thought not of it at the time. For the present I was busily employed reflecting on my new situation, and the conduct to be observed in it. The thought of suicide had twice, in moments of uncommon despair, suggested itself to my mind; but it was far from my habitual meditations. At present, and in all cases where death was immediately threatened me from the injustice of others, I felt myself disposed to contend to the last.

My prospects were indeed sufficiently gloomy and discouraging. How much labour had I exerted, first to extricate myself from prison, and next to evade the diligence of my pursuers; and the result of all, to be brought back to the point from which I began! I had gained fame in-

deed, the miserable fame to have my story bawled forth by hawkers and ballad-mongers, to have my praises as an active and enterprising villain celebrated among footmen and chambermaids; but I was neither an Erostratus nor an Alexander, to die contented with that species of eulogium. With respect to all that was solid, what chance could I ascribe to new exertions of a similar nature? Never was a human creature pursued by enemies more inventive or envenomed. I could have small hope that they would ever cease their persecution, or that my future attempts would be crowned with a more desirable issue.

They were considerations like these that dictated my resolution. My mind had been gradually weaning from Mr. Falkland, till its feelings rose to something like abhorrence. I had long cherished a reverence for him, which not even animosity and subornation on his

part could readily destroy. But I now ascribed a character so inhumanly sanguinary to his mind; I saw something so fiend-like in the thus hunting me round the world, and determining to be satisfied with nothing less than my blood, while at the same time he knew my innocence, my indisposition to mischief, nay I might add, my virtues; that henceforth I trampled reverence and the recollection of former esteem under my feet. I lost all regard to his intellectual greatness, and all pity for the agonies of his soul. I also would abjure forbearance. I would show myself bitter and inflexible as he had done. Was it wise in him to drive me into extremity and madness? Had he no fears for his own secret and atrocious offences?

I had been obliged to spend the remainder of the night upon which I had been apprehended, in prison. During the interval I had thrown off every ves-

tige of disguise, and appeared the next morning in my own person. I was of course easily identified; and, this being the whole with which the magistrates before whom I now stood, thought themselves concerned, they were proceeding to make out an order for my being conducted back to my own county. I suspended the dispatch of this measure, by observing that I had something to disclose. This is an overture, to which men appointed for the administration of criminal justice, never fail to attend.

I went before the magistrates to whose office Gines and his comrade conducted me, fully determined to publish those astonishing secrets, of which I had hitherto been the faithful depository; and once for all to turn the tables upon my accuser. It was time that the real criminal should be the sufferer, and not that innocence should for ever labour under the oppression of guilt.

I said that I had always protested my innocence, and must now repeat the protest.

In that case, retorted the senior magistrate abruptly, what can you have to disclose? If you are innocent, that is no business of ours! We act officially.'

I always declared, continued I, that I was the perpetrator of no guilt, but that the guilt wholly belonged to my accuser. He privately conveyed these effects among my property, and then charged me with the robbery. I now declare more than that, that this man is a murderer, that I detected his criminality, and that, for that reason, he is determined to deprive me of life. I presume, gentlemen, that you do consider it as your business to take this declaration. I am persuaded you will be by no means disposed, actively or passively, to contribute to the atrocious injustice under which I suffer, to the imprisonment and con-

demnation of an innocent man, in order that a murderer may go free. I suppressed this story as long as I could. I was extremely averse to be the author of the unhappiness or the death of a human being. But all patience and submission have their limits.

Give me leave, sir, rejoined the magistrate, with an air of affected moderation, to ask you two questions. Were you any way aiding, abetting, or contributing to this murder?

No.

And pray, sir, who is this Mr. Falkland, and what may have been the nature of your connection with him?

Mr. Falkland is a gentleman of six thousand per annum. I lived with him as his secretary.

In other words you were his servant?

As you please.

Very well, sir, that is quite enough for me. First I have to tell you, as a ma-

gistrate, that I can have nothing to do with your declaration. If you had been concerned in the murder you talk of, that would alter the case. But it is out of all reasonable rule, for a magistrate to take an information from a felon, except against his accomplices. Next, I think it right to observe to you, in my own proper person, that you appear to me to be the most impudent rascal I ever saw. Why, are you such an ass as to suppose, that the sort of story you have been telling, can be of any service to you, either here, or at the assizes, or any where else? A fine time of it indeed it would be, if, when gentlemen of six thousand a-year take up their servants for robbing them, those servants could trump up such accusations as these, and could get any magistrate or court of justice to listen to them! Whether or no the felony with which you stand charged would have brought you to the gallows, I will not

pretend to say. But I am sure this story will. There would be a speedy end to all order and good government, if fellows that trample upon ranks and distinctions in this atrocious sort, were upon any consideration suffered to get off.

And do you refuse, sir, to attend to the particulars of the charge I allege?

Yes, sir, I do.—But, if I did not, pray what witnesses have you of the murder?

This question staggered me.

None.—But I believe I can make out a circumstantial proof, of a nature to force attention from the most indifferent hearer.

So I thought.—Officers, take him from the bar!

Such was the success of this ultimate resort on my part, upon which I had built with such undoubting confidence. Till now, I had conceived, that the unfavourable situation in which I was placed, was prolonged by my own forbearance;

and I had determined to endure all that human nature could support, rather than have recourse to this extreme recrimination. That idea secretly consoled me under all my calamities: it was a voluntary sacrifice, and was cheerfully made. I thought myself allied to the army of martyrs and confessors; I applauded my fortitude and self-denial; and I pleased myself with the idea, that I had the power, though I hoped never to employ it, by an unrelenting display of all my resources, to put an end at once to my sufferings and persecutions.

And this at last was the justice of mankind! A man, under certain circumstances, shall not be heard in the detection of a crime, because he has not been a participator of it! The story of a flagitious murder, shall be listened to with indifference, while an innocent man is hunted, like a wild beast, to the furthest

corners of the earth! Six thousand a year shall protect a man from accusation; and the validity of an impeachment shall be superseded, because the author of it is a servant!

I was conducted back to the very prison, from which a few months before I had made my escape. With a bursting heart I entered those walls, compelled to feel that all my more than Herculean labours served for my own torture, and for no other end. Since my escape from prison, I had acquired some knowledge of the world; I had learned by bitter experience, by how many links society has a hold upon me, and how closely the snares of despotism beset me. I no longer beheld the world, as my youthful fancy had once induced me to do, as a scene, in which to hide or to appear, and to exhibit the freaks of a wanton vivacity. I saw my whole species, as ready, in one mode or other, to be made the instru-

ments of the tyrant. Hope died away in the bottom of my heart. Shut up for the first night in my dungeon, I was seized at intervals with temporary frenzy. From time to time, I rent the universal silence with the roarings of unsupportable despair. But this was a transient distraction. I soon returned to the sober recollection of myself and my miseries.

My prospects were more gloomy, and my situation apparently more irremediable than ever. I was exposed again, if that were of any account, to the insolence and tyranny that are uniformly exercised within those walls. Why should I repeat the loathsome tale of all that was endured by me, and is endured by every man, who is unhappy enough to fall under the government of these consecrated ministers of national jurisprudence? The sufferings I had already experienced, my anxieties, my flight, the perpetual expectation of being discovered, worse than

the discovery itself, would perhaps have been enough to satisfy the most insensible individual in the court of his own conscience, if I had even been the felon I was pretended to be. But the law has neither eyes, nor ears, nor bowels of humanity; and it turns into marble the hearts of all those that are nursed in its principles.

I however once more recovered my spirit of determination. I resolved that, while I had life, I would never be deserted by this spirit. Oppressed, annihilated I might be; but, if I died, I would die resisting. What use, what advantage, what pleasurable sentiment, could arise from a tame surrender? There is no man that is ignorant, that to humble yourself at the feet of the law is a bootless task; in her courts there is no room for amendment and reformation.

My fortitude may to some persons appear above the standard of human na-

ture. But, if I draw back the veil from my heart, they will readily confess their mistake. My heart bled at every pore. My resolution was not the calm sentiment of philosophy and reason. It was a gloomy and desperate purpose; the creature, not of hope, but of a mind austerely held to its design, that felt, as it were, satisfied with the naked effort, and prepared to give success or miscarriage to the winds. It was to this miserable condition, which might awaken sympathy in the most hardened bosom, that Mr. Falkland had reduced me.

In the mean time, strange as it may seem, here, in prison, subject to innumerable hardships, and in the assured expectation of a sentence of death, I recovered my health. I ascribe this to the state of my mind, which was now changed, from perpetual anxiety, terror, and alarm, the too frequent inmates of a prison, but which I, upon this occasion,

did not seem to bring along with me, to a desperate firmness.

I anticipated the event of my trial. I was determined once more to escape from my prison, nor did I doubt of my ability to effect, at least, this first step towards my future preservation. The assizes however were near, and there were certain considerations, unnecessary to be detailed, that persuaded me there might be benefit in waiting till my trial should actually be terminated, before I made my attempt.

It stood upon the list as one of the latest to be brought forward. I was therefore extremely surprised, to find it called out of its order, early on the morning of the second day. But, if this were unexpected, how much greater was my astonishment, when my prosecutor was called, to find neither Mr. Falkland, nor Mr. Forester, nor a single individual of any description appear against me! The recognizances into which my prosecutors

had entered, were declared to be forfeited; and I was dismissed without further impediment from the bar.

The effect which this incredible reverse produced upon my mind, it is impossible to express. I, who had come to that bar with the sentence of death already in idea ringing in my ears, to be told that I was free to transport myself whithersoever I pleased! Was it for this that I had broken through so many locks, and bolts, and the adamantine walls of my prison; that I had passed so many anxious days, and sleepless, spectre-haunted nights; that I had racked my invention for expedients of evasion and concealment; that my mind had been roused to an energy of which I could scarcely have believed it capable; that my existence had been enthralled to an ever-living torment, such as I could scarcely have supposed it in man to endure? Great God! what is man? Is he thus blind to the fu-

ture, thus totally unsuspecting of what is to occur in the next moment of his existence? I have somewhere read, that heaven in mercy hides from us the future incidents of our life. My own experience does not well accord with this assertion. In this instance at least, I should have been saved from insupportable labour and undescribable anguish, could I have foreseen the catastrophe of this most interesting transaction.

CHAP. XII.

It was not long before I took my everlasting leave of this detested and miserable scene. My heart was for the present too full of astonishment and exultation in this unexpected deliverance, to admit of anxiety about the future. I withdrew from the town, I rambled with a slow and thoughtful pace, now bursting with exclamation, and now buried in profound and undefinable reverie. Accident led me towards the very heath which had first sheltered me, when, upon a former occasion, I broke out of my prison. I wandered among its cavities and its vallies. It was a forlorn and desolate solitude. I continued here, I know not how long. Night at length overtook me unperceiv-

ed, and I prepared to return for the present to the town I had quitted.

It was now perfectly dark, when two men, whom I had not previously observed, sprung upon me from behind. They seized me by the arms, and threw me upon the ground. I had no time for resistance or recollection. I could however perceive that one of them was the diabolical Gines. They blindfolded, gagged me, and hurried me I knew not whither. As we passed along in silence, I endeavoured to conjecture what could be the meaning of this extraordinary violence. I was strongly impressed with the idea that, after the event of this morning, the most severe and painful part of my history was past; and, strange as it may seem, I could not persuade myself to regard with alarm this unexpected attack. It might however be some new project, suggested by the brutal temper and unrelenting animosity of Gines.

I presently found that we were returned into the town I had just quitted. They led me into a house, and, as soon as they had taken possession of a room, freed me from the restraints they had before imposed. Here Gines informed me with a malicious grin, that no harm was intended me, and therefore I should show most sense in keeping myself quiet. I perceived that we were in an inn; I overheard company in a room at no great distance from us, and therefore was now as thoroughly aware as he could be, that there was at present little reason to stand in fear of any species of violence, and that it would be time enough to resist, when they attempted to conduct me from the inn, in the same manner that they had brought me into it. I was not without some curiosity to see the conclusion, that was to follow upon so extraordinary a commencement.

The preliminaries I have described

were scarcely completed, before Mr. Falkland entered the room. I remember Collins, when he first communicated to me the particulars of our patron's history, observed that he was totally unlike the man he had once been. I had no means of ascertaining the truth of that observation. But it was strikingly applicable to the spectacle which now presented itself to my eyes, though, when I last beheld this unhappy man, he had been a victim to the same passions, a prey to the same undying remorse, as now. Misery was at that time inscribed in legible characters upon his countenance. But now he appeared like nothing that had ever been visible in human shape. His visage was haggard, emaciated and fleshless. His complexion was a dun and tarnished red, the colour uniform through every region of the face, and suggested the idea of its being burnt and parched by the eternal fire that burned within

him. His eyes were red, quick, wandering, full of suspicion and rage. His hair was neglected, ragged and floating. His whole figure was thin, to a degree that suggested the idea, rather of a skeleton, than a person actually alive. Life seemed hardly to be the capable inhabitant of so woe-begone and ghost-like a figure. The taper of wholsome life was expired; but passion, and fierceness, and frenzy, were able for the present to supply its place.

I was to the utmost degree astonished and shocked at the sight of him.—He sternly commanded my conductors to leave the room.

Well, sir, I have this day successfully exerted myself to save your life from the gallows. A fortnight ago you did what you were able to bring my life to that ignominious close.

Were you so stupid and undistinguishing, as not to know that the preservation

of your life was the uniform object of my exertions? Did not I maintain you in prison? Did not I endeavour to prevent your being sent thither? Could you mistake the bigoted and obstinate conduct of Forester in offering a hundred guineas for your apprehension, for mine?

I had my eye upon you in all your wanderings. You have taken no material step through their whole course, with which I have not been acquainted. I meditated to do you good. I have spilled no blood but that of Tyrrel: that was in the moment of passion, and it has been the subject of my uninterrupted and hourly remorse. I have connived at no man's fate but that of the Hawkinses: they could no otherwise have been saved, than by my acknowledging myself a murderer. The rest of my life has all been spent in acts of benevolence.

I meditated to do you good. For that reason I was willing to prove you.

You pretended to act towards me with consideration and forbearance. If you had persisted in that to the end, I would yet have found a way to reward you. I left you to your own discretion. You might show the impotent malignity of your own heart, but, in the circumstances in which you were then placed, I knew you could not hurt me. Your forbearance has proved, as I all along suspected, empty and treacherous. You have attempted to blast my reputation. You have sought to disclose the select and eternal secret of my soul. Because you have done that, I will never forgive you. I will remember it to my latest breath. The memory shall survive me, when my existence is no more. Do you think you are out of the reach of my power, because a court of justice has acquitted you?

While Mr. Falkland was speaking, a sudden distemper came over his counte-

nance, his whole frame was shaken by an instantaneous convulsion, and he staggered to a chair. In about three minutes he recovered.

Yes, said he, I am still alive. I shall live for days, and months, and years; the power that made me, of whatever kind it be, can only determine how long. I live the guardian of my reputation. That, and to endure a misery such as man never endured, are the only ends to which I live. But, when I am no more, my fame shall still survive. My character shall be revered as spotless and unimpeachable by all posterity, as long as the name of Falkland shall be repeated in the most distant regions of the many-peopled globe.

Having said this, he returned to the discourse which more immediately related to my future condition and happiness.

There is one condition, said he, upon which you may obtain some mitigation

of your future calamity. It is for that purpose that I have sent for you. Listen to my proposal with deliberation and sobriety! Remember, that the insanity is not less to trifle with the resolved determination of my soul, than it would be to pull a mountain upon your head, that hung trembling upon the edge of the mighty Apennine!

I insist then upon your signing a paper declaring, in the most solemn manner, that I am innocent of murder, and that the charge you alleged at the office in Bow-Street, is false, malicious and groundless. Perhaps you may scruple, out of a regard to truth. Is truth then entitled to adoration for its own sake, and not for the sake of the happiness it is calculated to produce? Will a reasonable man sacrifice to barren truth, when benevolence, humanity, and every consideration that is dear to the human heart, require that it should be superseded? It is probable

that I may never make use of this paper, but I require it, as the only practicable reparation to the honour you have assailed. This is what I had to propose. I expect your answer.

Sir, answered I, I have heard you to an end, and I stand in need of no deliberation to enable me to answer you in the negative. You took me up a raw and inexperienced boy, capable of being moulded to any form you pleased. But you have communicated to me volumes of experience, in a very short period. I am no longer irresolute and pliable. What is the power you retain over my fate, I am unable to discover. You may destroy me; but you cannot make me tremble. I am not concerned to enquire, whether what I have suffered, flowed from you by design or otherwise, whether you were the author of my miseries, or only connived at them. This I know, that I have suffered too exquisitely on your ac-

count, for me to feel the least remaining claim on your part to my making any voluntary sacrifice.

You say that benevolence and humanity require this sacrifice of me. No. It would only be a sacrifice to your mad and misguided love of fame, to that passion which has been the source of all your miseries, of the most tragical calamities to others, and of every misfortune that has happened to me. I have no forbearance to exercise towards that passion. If you be not yet cured of this tremendous and sanguinary folly, at least I will do nothing to cherish it. I know not whether from my youth I was destined for a hero; but I may thank you for having taught me a lesson of insurmountable fortitude.

What is it that you require of me? That I should sign away my own reputation for the better maintaining of yours. Where is the equality of that? What is

it that casts me at such an immense distance below you, as to make every thing that relates to me wholly unworthy of consideration? You have been educated in the prejudice of birth. I abhor that prejudice. You have made me desperate, and I utter what that desperation suggests.

You will tell me perhaps, that I have no reputation to lose; that, while you are esteemed faultless and unblemished, I am universally reputed a thief, a suborner, and a calumniator. Be it so. I will never do any thing to countenance those imputations. The more I am destitute of the esteem of mankind, the more careful I will be to preserve my own. I will never, from fear, or any other mistaken motive, do any thing of which I ought to be ashamed.

You are determined to be for ever my enemy. I have in no degree deserved this eternal abhorrence. I have always

esteemed and pitied you. For a considerable time I rather chose to expose myself to every kind of misfortune, than disclose the secret that was so dear to you. I was not deterred by your menaces, (What could you make me suffer, more than I actually suffered?) but by the humanity of my own heart; in which, and not in means of violence, you ought to have reposed your confidence. What is the mysterious vengeance that you can yet execute against me? You menaced me before; you can menace no worse now. You are wearing out the springs of terror. Do with me as you please! You teach me to hear you with an unshrinking and desperate firmness. Recollect yourself! I did not proceed to the step with which you reproach me, till I was apparently urged to the very last extremity. I had suffered as much as human nature can suffer; I had lived in the midst of eternal alarm and unin-

termitted watchfulness; I had twice been driven to purposes of suicide. I am now sorry however that the step of which you complain, was ever adopted. But, urged to exasperation by an unintermitted rigour, I had no time to cool or to deliberate. Even at present I cherish no vengeance against you. All that is reasonable, all that can really contribute to your security, I will readily concede; but I will not be driven to an act repugnant to all reason, integrity, and justice.

Mr. Falkland listened to me with astonishment and impatience. He had entertained no previous conception of the firmness I displayed. Several times he was convulsed with the fury that laboured in his breast. Once and again he betrayed an intention to interrupt; but he was restrained by the collectedness of my manner, and perhaps by a desire to be acquainted with the entire state of my mind. Finding that I had concluded,

he paused for a moment; his passion seemed gradually to enlarge, till it was no longer capable of control.

It is well! said he, gnashing his teeth, and stamping upon the ground. You refuse the composition I offer! I have no power to persuade you to compliance! You defy me! At least I have a power respecting you, and that power I will exercise; a power that shall grind you into atoms. I condescend to no more expostulation. I know what I am, and what I can be. I know what you are, and what fate is reserved for you!

Saying this, he quitted the room.

Such were the particulars of this memorable scene. The impression it has left upon my understanding is indelible. The figure and appearance of Mr. Falkland, his death-like weakness and decay, his more than mortal energy and rage, the words that he spoke, the motives that animated him, produced one compounded

effect upon my mind, that nothing of the same nature could ever parallel. The idea of his misery thrilled through my frame. How weak in comparison of it, is the imaginary hell, which the great enemy of mankind is represented as carrying every where about with him!

From this consideration, my mind presently turned to the menaces he had vented against myself. They were all mysterious and undefined. He had talked of power, but had given no hint from which I could collect in what he imagined it to consist. He had talked of misery, but had not dropped a syllable respecting the nature of the misery to be inflicted.

I sat still for some time, ruminating on these thoughts. Neither Mr. Falkland, nor any other person appeared, to disturb my meditations. I rose, went out of the room, and from the inn into the street. No one offered to molest me. It was

strange! What was the nature of this power, from which I was to apprehend so much, yet which seemed to leave me at perfect liberty? I began to imagine that all I had heard from this dreadful adversary, was mere madness and extravagance, and that he was at length deprived of the use of reason, which had long served him only as a medium of torment. Yet was it likely in that case, that he should be able to employ Gines and his associate, who had just been his instruments of violence upon my person?

I proceeded along the streets with considerable caution. I looked before me and behind me, as well as the darkness would allow me to do, that I might not again be hunted in sight by some man of stratagem and violence without my perceiving it. I went not, as before, beyond the limits of the town, but considered the streets, the houses, and the inhabitants, as affording some degree of security. I was

still walking with my mind thus full of suspicion and forecast, when I discovered Thomas, that servant of Mr. Falkland whom I have already more than once had occasion to mention. He advanced towards me with an air so blunt and direct, as instantly to remove from me the idea of any thing insidious in his purpose; beside that I had always felt the character of Thomas, rustic and uncultivated as it was, to be entitled to a more than common portion of esteem.

Thomas, said I, as he advanced, I hope you are willing to give me joy, that I am at length delivered from the dreadful danger, which for many months haunted me so unmercifully.

No, rejoined Thomas roughly, I be not at all willing. I do not know what to make of myself in this affair. While you were in prison in that miserable fashion, I felt all at one almost, as if I loved you: and now that that is over,

and you are turned out loose in the world to do your worst, my blood rises at the very sight of you. To look at you, you are almost that very lad Williams for whom I could with pleasure, as it were, have laid down my life; and yet, behind that smiling face, there lie robbery, and lying, and every thing that is ungrateful and murderous. Your last action was worse than all the rest. How could you find in your heart to revive that cruel story about Mr. Tyrrel, which every body had agreed, out of regard to the squire, never to mention again, and of which I know, and you know, he is as innocent as the child unborn? There are causes and reasons, or else I could have wished from the bottom of my soul never to have set eyes on you again.

And you still persist in your hard thoughts of me?

Worse! I think worse of you than ever! Before, I thought you as bad as

man could be. I wonder from my soul what you are to do next. But you make good the old saying, Needs must go, that the devil drives.

And so there is never to be an end of my misfortunes! What can Mr. Falkland contrive for me worse, than the ill opinion and enmity of all mankind?

Mr. Falkland contrive? He is the best friend you have in the world, though you are the basest traitor to him. Poor man! it makes one's heart ache to look at him; he is the very image of grief. And it is not clear to me that it is not all owing to you. At least you have given the finishing lift to the misfortune that was already destroying him. There have been the devil and all to pay between him and squire Forester. The squire is right raving mad with my master, for having outwitted him in the matter of the trial, and saved your life. He swears that you shall be taken up and tried all over again

at the next assizes; but my master is resolute, and I believe will carry it his own way. He says indeed, that the law will not allow squire Forester to have his will in this. To see him ordering every thing for your benefit, and taking all your maliciousness as mild and innocent as a lamb, and to think of your vile proceedings against him, is a sight one shall not see again, go all the world over. For God's sake, repent of your reprobate doings, and make what little reparation is in your power! Think of your poor soul, before you awake, as to be sure one of these days you will, in fire and brimstone everlasting!

Saying this, he held out his hand, and took hold of mine. The action seemed strange, but I at first thought it the unpremeditated result of his solemn and well-intended adjuration. I felt however that he put something into my hand. The next moment he quitted his hold,

and hastened from me with the swiftness of an arrow. What he had thus given me, was a bank-note of twenty pounds. I had no doubt that he had been charged to deliver it to me from Mr. Falkland.

What was I to infer? What light did it throw upon the intentions of my inexorable persecutor? His animosity against me was as great as ever; that I had just had confirmed to me from his own mouth. Yet his animosity appeared to be still tempered with the remains of humanity. He prescribed to it a line, wide enough to embrace the gratification of his views, and within the boundaries of that line it stopped. But this discovery carried no consolation to my mind. I knew not what portion of calamity I was fated to endure, before his jealousy of dishonour, and inordinate thirst of fame, would deem themselves satisfied.

Another question offered itself. Was I to receive the money which had just

been put into my hands? the money of a man, who had inflicted upon me injuries, less than those which he had entailed upon himself, but the greatest that one man can inflict upon another? who had blasted my youth, who had destroyed my peace, who had held me up to the abhorrence of mankind, and rendered me an outcast upon the face of the earth? who had forged the basest and most atrocious falshoods, and urged them with a seriousness and perseverance, which produced universal belief? who, an hour before, had vowed against me inexorable enmity, and sworn to entail upon me misery without end? Would not this conduct on my part, betray a base and abject spirit, that crouched under tyranny, and kissed the hands that were imbrued in my blood!

If these reasons appeared strong, neither was the other side without reasons in reply. I wanted the money: not for any

purpose of vice or superfluity, but for those purposes without which life cannot subsist. Man ought to be able, wherever placed, to find for himself the means of existence; but I was to open a new scene of life, to remove to some distant spot, to be prepared against the ill-will of mankind, and the unexplored projects of hostility of a most accomplished foe. The actual means of existence are the property of all. What should hinder me from taking that of which I was really in want, when, in taking it, I risked no vengeance, and perpetrated no violence? The property in question will be beneficial to me, and the voluntary surrender of it, is accompanied with no injury to its late proprietor; what other condition can be necessary to render the use of it on my part a duty? He that lately possessed it has injured me; does that alter its value as a medium of exchange? He

will boast perhaps of the imaginary obligation he has conferred on me: Surely to shrink from a thing in itself right, from any such apprehension, can be the result only of pusillanimity and cowardice!

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. XIII.

INFLUENCED by these reasonings, I determined to retain what had thus been put into my hands. My next care was in regard to the scene I should choose, as the retreat of that life which I had just saved from the grasp of the executioner. The danger to which I was exposed, of forcible interruption in my pursuits, was probably in some respects less now, than it had been previously to this crisis. Beside, that I was considerably influenced in this deliberation, by the strong loathing I conceived for the situations in which I had lately been engaged. I knew not in what mode Mr. Falkland intended to exercise his vengeance against me; but I was seized with so unconquerable an aversion

to disguise, and the idea of spending my life in personating a fictitious character, that I could not, for the present at least, reconcile my mind to any thing of that nature. The same kind of disgust I had conceived for the metropolis, where I had spent so many hours of artifice, sadness and terror. I therefore decided in favour of the project which had formerly proved amusing to my imagination, of withdrawing to some distant, rural scene, a scene of calmness and obscurity, where for a few years at least, perhaps during the life of Mr. Falkland, I might be hidden from the world, recover the wounds my mind had received in this fatal connection, methodise and improve the experience which had been accumulated, cultivate the faculties I in any degree possessed, and employ the intervals of these occupations in simple industry, and the intercourse of guileless, uneducated, kind-intentioned minds.

The menaces of my persecutor seemed to forebode the inevitable interruption of this system. But I deemed it wise to put these menaces out of my consideration. I compared them to death, which must infallibly overtake us, we know not when; but the possibility of whose arrival next year, next week, to-morrow, must be left out of the calculation of him who would enter upon any important or well-concerted undertaking.

Such were the ideas that determined my choice. Thus did my youthful mind delineate the system of distant years, even when the threats of instant calamity still sounded in my ears. I was inured to the apprehension of mischief, till, at last, the hoarse roarings of the beginning tempest, had lost their power of annihilating my peace. I however thought it necessary, while I was most palpably within the sphere of the enemy, to exert every practicable degree of vigilance. I was care-

ful not to incur the hazards of darkness and solitude. When I left the town, it was with the stage-coach, an obvious source of protection against glaring and enormous violence. Meanwhile I found myself no more exposed to molestation in my progress, than the man in the world who should have had the least reason for apprehensions of this nature. As the distance increased, I relaxed something in my precaution, though still awake to a sense of danger, and constantly pursued with the image of my foe. I fixed upon an obscure market-town in Wales as the chosen seat of my operations. This place recommended itself to my observation, as I was wandering in quest of an abode. It was clean, cheerful, and of great simplicity of appearance. It was at a distance from any public and frequented road, and had nothing which could deserve the name of trade. The face of nature around

it, was agreeably diversified, being partly wild and romantic, and partly rich and abundant in production.

Here I solicited employment in two professions; the first that of a watchmaker, in which though the instructions I had received were few, they were eked out and assisted by a mind fruitful in mechanical invention; the other that of an instructor in mathematics and its practical application, geography, astronomy, land-surveying and navigation. Neither of these was a very copious source of emolument in the obscure retreat I had chosen for myself: but, if my receipts were slender, my disbursements were still fewer. In this little town I became acquainted with the vicar, the apothecary, the lawyer, and the rest of the persons who, time out of mind, had been regarded as the top gentry of the place. Each of these centered in himself a variety of occupations. There

was little in the appearance of the vicar that reminded you of his profession, except on the recurring Sunday. At other times he condescended, with his evangelical hand, to guide the plough, or to drive the cows from the field to the farm-yard for the milking. The apothecary occasionally officiated as a barber, and the lawyer was the village schoolmaster.

By all these persons I was received with kindness and hospitality. Among people thus remote from the bustle of human life, there is an open spirit of confidence, by means of which a stranger easily finds access to their benevolence and good will. My manners had never been greatly debauched from the simplicity of rural life, by the scenes through which I had passed; and the hardships I had endured, had given additional mildness to my character. In the theatre upon which I was now placed, I had no

rival. My mechanical occupation had hitherto been a non-resident; and the schoolmaster, who did not aspire to the sublime heights of science I professed to communicate, was willing to admit me as a partner, in the task of civilising the unpolished manners of the inhabitants. For the parson, civilisation was no part of his trade; his business was with the things of a better life, not with the carnal concerns of this material scene; in truth, his thoughts were principally occupied with his oatmeal and his cows.

These however were not the only companions, which this remote retirement afforded me. There was a family of a very different description, of which I gradually became the chosen intimate. The father was a shrewd, sensible, rational man, but who had turned his principal attention to subjects of agriculture. His wife was a truly admirable and extraordinary woman. She was the daugh-

ter of a Neapolitan nobleman, who, after having visited, and made a considerable figure in every country of Europe, had at length received the blow of fate in this village. He had been banished his country upon suspicion of religious and political heresy, and his estates confiscated. With this only child, like Prospero in the Tempest, he had withdrawn himself to one of the most obscure and uncultivated regions of the world. Very soon however after his arrival in Wales, he had been seized with a malignant fever, which carried him off in three days. He died possessed of no other property, than a few jewels, and a bill of credit, to no considerable amount, upon an English banker.

Here then was the infant Laura, left in a foreign country, and without a single friend. The father of her present husband was led by motives of pure humanity, to seek to mitigate the misfortunes of the dying Italian. Though a plain unin-

structed man, with no extraordinary refinement of intellect, there was something in his countenance, that determined the stranger, in his present forlorn and melancholy situation, to make him his executor, and the guardian of his daughter. The Neapolitan understood enough of English, to explain his wishes to this friendly attendant of his death-bed. As his circumstances were narrow, the servants of the stranger, two Italians, a male and a female, were sent back to their own country, soon after the death of their master.

Laura was at this time eight years of age. At these tender years she had been susceptible of little direct instruction; and, as she grew up, even the memory of her father, became, from year to year, more vague and indistinct in her mind. But there was something she derived from her father, whether along with the life he

bestowed, or as the consequence of his instruction and manners, which no time could efface. Every added year of her life, contributed to develop the fund of her accomplishments. She read, she observed, she reflected. Without instructors, she taught herself to draw, to sing, and to understand the more polite European languages. As she had no society, in this remote situation, but that of peasants, she had no idea of honour or superiority to be derived from her acquisitions; but pursued them from a secret taste, and as the sources of personal enjoyment.

A mutual attachment gradually arose, between her and the only son of her guardian. His father led him, from early youth, to the labours and the sports of the field, and there was little congeniality between his pursuits and those of Laura. But this was a defect that she was slow to discover. She had never

been accustomed to society in her chosen amusements, and habit, at that time, even made her conceive, that they were indebted to solitude for an additional relish. The youthful rustic had great integrity, great kindness of heart, and was a lad of excellent sense. He was florid, well-proportioned, and the goodness of his disposition made his manners amiable. Accomplishments greater than these she had never seen in human form, since the death of her father. In fact she is scarcely to be considered as a sufferer in this instance; since, in her forlorn and destitute condition, it is little probable, when we consider the habits and notions that now prevail, that her accomplishments, unassisted by fortune, would have procured her an equal alliance in marriage.

When she became a mother, her heart opened to a new affection. The idea now presented itself, which had never

occurred before, that in her children at least, she might find the partners and companions of her favourite employments. She was at the time of my arrival, mother of four, the eldest of which was a son. To all of them she had been a most assiduous instructor. It was well for her perhaps, that she obtained this sphere for the exercise of her mind. It came, just at the period when the charm which human life derives from novelty, is beginning to wear off. It gave her new activity and animation. It is perhaps impossible, that the refinements of which human nature is capable, should not, after a time, subside into sluggishness, if they be not aided by the influence of society and affection.

The son of the Welch farmer by this admirable woman, was about seventeen years of age, at the time of my settlement in their neighbourhood. His eldest sister was one year younger than himself.

The whole family composed a group, with which a lover of tranquillity and virtue would have delighted to associate in any situation. It is easy therefore to conceive how much I rejoiced in their friendship, in this distant retirement, and suffering, as I felt myself, from the maltreatment and desertion of my species. The amiable Laura had a wonderful quickness of eye, and rapidity of apprehension; but this feature in her countenance was subdued by a sweetness of disposition, such as I never, in any other instance, saw expressed in the looks of a human being. She soon distinguished me by her kindness and friendship; for, living as she had done, though familiar with the written productions of a cultivated intellect, she had never seen the thing itself realised in a living being, except in the person of her father. She delighted to converse with me upon subjects of literature and taste, and she

eagerly invited my assistance in the education of her children. The son, though young, had been so happily improved and instructed by his mother, that I found in him nearly all the most essential qualities we require in a friend. Engagement and inclination equally led me to pass a considerable part of every day in this agreeable society. Laura treated me as if I had been one of the family, and I sometimes flattered myself that I might one day become such in reality. What an enviable resting-place for me, who had known nothing but calamity, and had scarcely dared to look for sympathy and kindness in the countenance of a human being.

The sentiments of friendship which early disclosed themselves between me and the members of this amiable family, daily became stronger. At every interview, the confidence reposed in me by the mother, increased. While our fami-

liarity gained in duration, it equally gained in that subtlety of communication, by which it seemed to shoot forth its roots in every direction. There are a thousand little evanescent touches in the development of a growing friendship, that are neither thought of, nor would be understood, between common acquaintances. I honoured and esteemed the respectable Laura like a mother; for, though the difference of our ages was by no means sufficient to authorise the sentiment, it was irresistibly suggested to me, by the fact of her always being presented to my observation under the maternal character. Her son was a lad of great understanding, generosity, and feeling, and of no contemptible acquirements; while his tender years, and the uncommon excellence of his mother, subtracted something from the independence of his judgment, and impressed him with a sort of religious deference

for her will. In the eldest daughter I beheld the image of Laura; for that I felt attached to her for the present; and I sometimes conceived it probable, that hereafter I might learn to love her for her own sake.—Alas, it was thus that I amused myself with the visions of distant years, while I stood in reality on the brink of the precipice!

It will perhaps be thought strange, that I never once communicated the particulars of my story to this amiable matron, or to my young friend, for such I may almost venture to call him, her son. But in truth I abhorred the memory of this story; I placed all my hopes of happiness in the prospect of its being consigned to oblivion. I fondly flattered myself that such would be the event; in the midst of my unlooked-for happiness, I scarcely recollected, or, recollecting, was disposed to yield but a small degree of credit to, the menaces of Mr. Falkland.

One day, that I was sitting alone with the accomplished Laura, she repeated his all-dreadful name. I started with astonishment, amazed that a woman like this, who knew nobody, who lived as it were alone, in a corner of the universe, who had never, in a single instance, entered into any fashionable circle, this admirable and fascinating hermit, should by some unaccountable accident, have become acquainted with this fatal and tremendous name. Astonishment however was not my only sensation. I became pale with terror; I rose from my seat; I attempted to sit down again; I reeled out of the room, and hastened to bury myself in solitude. The unexpectedness of the incident, took from me all precaution, and overwhelmed my faculties. The penetrating Laura observed my behaviour; but nothing further occurring to excite her attention to it at that time, and conclud-

ing from my manner that enquiry would be painful to me, she humanely suppressed her curiosity.

I afterwards found that Mr. Falkland had been known to the father of Laura; that he had been acquainted with the story of count Malvesi, and with a number of other transactions, redounding in the highest degree to the credit of the gallant Englishman. The Neapolitan had left letters in which these transactions were recorded, and which spoke of Mr. Falkland in the highest terms of panegyric. Laura had been used to regard every little relic of her father with a sort of religious veneration; and, by this accident, the name of Mr. Falkland was connected in her mind, with the sentiments of unbounded esteem.

The scene by which I was surrounded was perhaps more grateful to me, than it would have been to most other persons with my degree of intellectual culti-

vation. Sore with persecution and distress, and bleeding at almost every vein, there was nothing I so much coveted as rest and tranquillity. It seemed as if my faculties were, at least for the time, exhausted by the late preternatural intensity of their exertions, and that they stood indispensably in need of a period of comparative suspension.

This was however but a temporary feeling. My mind had always been active, and I was probably indebted to the sufferings I had endured, and the exquisite and increased susceptibility they produced, for new energies. I soon felt the desire of some additional and vigorous pursuit. In this state of mind, I met by accident, in a neglected corner of the house of one of my neighbours, with a general dictionary of four of the northern languages. This incident gave a direction to my thoughts. In my youth I had not been inattentive to languages.

I determined to attempt, at least for my own use, an etymological analysis of the English language. I easily perceived that this pursuit had one advantage to a person in my situation, and that a small number of books, consulted with this view, would afford employment for a considerable time. I procured other dictionaries. In my incidental reading, I noted the manner in which words were used, and applied these remarks to the illustration of my general enquiry. I was unintermitted in my assiduity, and my collections promised to accumulate. Thus I was provided with sources both of industry and recreation, the more completely to divert my thoughts from the recollection of my past misfortunes.

In this state, so grateful to my feelings, week after week glided away without interruption and alarm. The situation in which I was now placed, had some resemblance to that in which I had

spent my earlier years, with the advantage of a more attractive society, and a riper judgment. I began to look back upon the intervening period, as upon a distempered and tormenting dream; or rather perhaps my feelings were like those of a man recovered from an interval of raging delirium, from ideas of horror, confusion, flight, persecution, agony and despair! When I recollected what I had undergone, it was not without satisfaction, as the recollection of a thing that was past; every day augmented my hope that it was never to return. Surely the dark and terrific menaces of Mr. Falkland were rather the perturbed suggestions of his angry mind, than the final result of a deliberate and digested system! How happy should I feel, beyond the ordinary lot of man, if, after the terrors I had undergone, I should now find myself unexpectedly restored to the immunities of a human being!

While I was thus soothing my mind with fond imaginations, it happened that a few bricklayers and their labourers came over from a distance of five or six miles, to work upon some additions to one of the better sort of houses in the town, which had changed its tenant. No incident could be more trivial than this, had it not been for a strange coincidence of time, between this circumstance, and a change which introduced itself into my situation. This first manifested itself, in a sort of shyness with which I was treated, first by one person, and then another, of my new-formed acquaintance. They were backward to enter into conversation with me, and answered my enquiries with an awkward and embarrassed air. When they met me in the street or the field, their countenances contracted a cloud, and they endeavoured to shun me. My scholars quitted me one after another; and I had no longer any em-

ployment in my mechanical profession. It is impossible to describe the sensations, which the gradual, but uninterrupted progress of this revolution produced in my mind. It seemed as if I had some contagious disease, from which every man shrunk with alarm, and left me to perish unassisted and alone. I asked one man and another to explain to me the meaning of these appearances; but every one avoided the task, and answered in an evasive and ambiguous manner. I sometimes supposed that it was all a delusion of the imagination; till the repetition of the sensation, brought the reality too painfully home to my apprehension. There are few things that give a greater shock to the mind, than a phenomenon in the conduct of our fellow men, of great importance to our concerns, and for which we are unable to assign any plausible reason. At times I was half inclined to believe that the

change was not in other men, but that some alienation of my own understanding generated the horrid vision. I endeavoured to awake from my dream, and return to my former state of enjoyment and happiness; but in vain. To the same consideration it may be ascribed, that, unacquainted with the source of the evil, observing its perpetual increase, and finding it, so far as I could perceive, entirely arbitrary in its nature, I was unable to ascertain its limits, or the degree in which it would finally overwhelm me.

In the midst however of the wonderful and seemingly inexplicable nature of this scene, there was one idea that instantly obtruded itself, and that I could never after banish from my mind. It is Falkland! In vain I struggled against the seeming improbability of the supposition. In vain I said, Mr. Falkland, wise as he is and pregnant in resources, acts

by human, not by supernatural means. He may overtake me by surprise and in a manner of which I have no previous expectation; but he cannot produce a great and notorious effect without some visible agency, however difficult it may be to trace that agency to its absolute author. He cannot, like those invisible personages who are supposed from time to time to interfere in human affairs, ride in the whirlwind, shroud himself in clouds and impenetrable darkness, and scatter destruction upon the earth from his secret habitation. Thus it was that I bribed my imagination, and endeavoured to persuade myself that my present unhappiness, originated in a different source from my former. All evils appeared trivial to me, in comparison of the recollection and perpetuation of my parent misfortune. I felt like a man distracted, by the incoherence of my ideas to my present situation, excluding from

it the machinations of Mr. Falkland, on the one hand; and on the other, by the horror I conceived at the bare possibility of again encountering his animosity, after a suspension of many weeks, a suspension as I had hoped for ever. An interval like this, was an age, to a person in the calamitous situation I had so long experienced. But, in spite of my efforts, I could not banish from my mind the dreadful idea. My original conceptions of the genius and perseverance of Mr. Falkland, had been such, that I could with difficulty think any thing impossible to him. I knew not how to set up my own opinions of material causes and the powers of the human mind, as the limits of existence. Mr. Falkland had always been to my imagination an object of wonder, and that which excites our wonder we scarcely suppose ourselves competent to analyse.

It may well be conceived, that one

of the first persons to whom I applied for an explanation of this dreadful mystery, was the accomplished Laura. My disappointment here cut me to the heart. I was not prepared for it. I recollected the ingenuousness of her nature, the frankness of her manners, the partiality with which she had honoured me. If I were mortified with the coldness, the ruggedness, and the cruel mistake of principles, with which the village inhabitants repelled my enquiries, the mortification I suffered, only drove me more impetuously to seek the cure of my griefs from this object of my admiration. In Laura, said I, I am secure from these vulgar prejudices. I confide in her justice. I am sure she will not cast me off unheard, nor without strictly examining a question on all sides, in which every thing that is valuable to a person she once esteemed, may be involved.

Thus encouraging myself, I turned

my steps to the place of her residence. As I passed along, I called up all my recollection, I summoned my faculties. I may be made miserable, said I, but it shall not be for want of any exertion of mine that promises to lead to happiness. I will be clear, collected, simple in narrative, ingenuous in communication. I will leave nothing unsaid that the case may reqiure. I will not volunteer any thing that relates to my former transactions with Mr. Falkland; but, if I find that my present calamity is connected with those transactions, I will not fear but that by an honest explanation I shall remove it.

I knocked at the door. A servant appeared, and told me that her mistress hoped I would excuse her; she must really beg to dispense with my visit.

I was thunderstruck. I was rooted to the spot. I had been carefully preparing my mind for every thing that I sup-

posed likely to happen, but this event had not entered into my calculations. I roused myself in a partial degree, and walked away without uttering a word.

I had not gone far, before I perceived one of the workmen following me, who put into my hands a billet. The contents were these.

MR. WILLIAMS,

LET me see you no more. I have a right at least to expect your compliance with this requisition; and, upon that condition, I pardon the enormous impropriety and guilt, with which you have conducted yourself to me and my family.

LAURA DENISON.

The sensations with which I read these few lines, are indescribable. I found in them a dreadful confirmation of the calamity that on all sides invaded me.

But what I felt most, was the unmoved coldness with which they appeared to be written. This coldness from Laura, my comforter, my friend, my mother! To part with me without a pang! To dismiss, to cast me off, for ever, without one thought of compunction!

I determined however, in spite of her requisition, and in spite of her coldness, to have an explanation with her. I did not despair of conquering the antipathy she harboured. I did not doubt that I would rouse her from the vulgar and unworthy conception, of condemning a man, in points the most material to his happiness, without stating the accusations that are urged against him, and without hearing him in reply.

Though I had no doubt, by means of resolution, of gaining access to her in her house, yet I preferred taking her unprepared, and not warmed against me by any previous contention. Accord-

ingly the next morning, at the time she usually devoted to half an hour's air and exercise, I hastened to her garden, leaped the paling, and concealed myself in an arbour. Presently I saw, from my retreat, the younger part of the family, strolling through the garden, and from thence into the fields, but it was not my business to be seen by them. I looked after them however with earnestness, unobserved; and I could not help asking myself, with a deep and heart-felt sigh, whether it were possible that I saw them now for the last time?

They had not advanced far into the fields, before their mother made her appearance. I observed in her her usual serenity and sweetness of countenance. I could feel my heart knocking against my ribs. My whole frame was in a tumult. I stole out of the arbour; and, as I advanced nearer, my pace became quickened.

For God's sake, madam, exclaimed I, give me a hearing! Do not avoid me!

She stood still. No, sir, she replied, I shall not avoid you. I wished you to dispense with this meeting. But, since I cannot obtain that,—I am conscious of no wrong; and therefore, though the meeting gives me pain, it inspires me with no fear.

Oh, madam, answered I, my friend! the object of all my reverence! whom I once ventured to call my mother! Can you wish not to hear me? Can you have no anxiety for my justication, whatever may be the unfavourable impression you may have received against me?

Not an atom. I have neither wish nor inclination to hear you. That tale which in its plain and unadorned state, is destructive of the character of him to whom it relates, no colouring can make an honest one.

Good God! Can you think of con-

demning a man, when you have heard only one side of his story?

Indeed I can, replied she, with dignity. The maxim of hearing both sides may be very well in some cases; but it would be ridiculous to suppose that there are not other cases, that, at the first mention, are too clear to admit the shadow of a doubt. By a well-concerted defence you may give me new reason to admire your abilities; but I am acquainted with them already. I can admire your abilities, without tolerating your character.

Madam! Amiable, exemplary Laura! whom, in the midst of all your harshness and inflexibility, I honour! I conjure you, by every thing that is sacred, to tell me what it is that has filled you with this sudden aversion to me.

No, sir: that you shall never obtain from me. I have nothing to say to you. I stand still and hear you: because virtue

disdains to appear abashed and confounded in the presence of vice. Your conduct even at this moment, in my opinion, condemns you. True virtue refuses the drudgery of explanation and apology. True virtue shines by its own light, and needs no art to set it off. You have the first principles of morality as yet to learn.

And can you imagine, that the most upright conduct, is always superior to the danger of ambiguity?

Exactly so. Virtue, sir, consists in actions, and not in words. The good man and the bad are characters precisely opposite, not characters distinguished from each other by imperceptible shades. The Providence that rules us all, has not permitted us to be left without a clue in the most important of all questions. Eloquence may seek to confound it; but it shall be my care to avoid its deceptive influence. I do not wish to have my

understanding perverted, and all the differences of things concealed from my apprehension.

Madam, madam! It would be impossible for you to hold this language, if you had not always lived in this obscure retreat, if you had ever been conversant with the passions and institutions of men.

It may be so. And, if that be the case, I have great reason to be thankful to my God, who has thus enabled me to preserve the innocence of my heart, and the integrity of my understanding.

Can you believe then, that ignorance is the only, or the safest, preservative of integrity?

Sir, I told you at first, and I repeat to you again, that all your declamation is in vain. I wish you would have saved me and yourself, that pain which is the only thing that can possibly result from it. But let us suppose that virtue could ever be the amphibious thing you would

have me believe. Is it possible, if you had been honest, that you would not have acquainted me with your story? Is it possible, that you would have left me to have been informed of it by a mere accident, and with all the shocking aggravations you well knew that accident would give it? Is it possible you should have violated the most sacred of all trusts, and have led me unknowingly to admit to the intercourse of my children, a character, which if, as you pretend, it is substantially honest, you cannot deny to be blasted and branded in the face of the whole world? Go, sir, I despise you. You are a monster, and not a man. I cannot tell whether my personal situation misleads me, but, to my thinking, this last action of yours is worse than all the rest. Nature has constituted me the protector of my children. I shall always remember and resent the indelible injury you have done

them. You have wounded me to the very heart, and have taught me to what a pitch the villainy of man can extend.

Madam, I can be silent no longer. I see that you have by some means come to a hearing of the story of Mr. Falkland.

I have. I am astonished you have the effrontery to pronounce his name. That name has been a denomination, as far back as my memory can reach, for the most exalted of mortals, the wisest and most generous of men.

Madam, I owe it to myself to set you right on this subject. Mr. Falkland——

Mr. Williams, I see my children returning from the fields, and coming this way. The basest action you ever did, was the obtruding yourself upon them as an instructor. I insist that you see them no more. I command you to be silent. I command you to withdraw. If you persist in your absurd resolution of expostulating with me, you must take some other time.

I could continue no longer. I was in a manner heart-broken through the whole of this dialogue. I could not think of protracting the pain of this admirable woman, upon whom, though I was innocent of the crimes she imputed to me, I had inflicted so much pain already. I yielded to the imperiousness of her commands, and withdrew.

I hastened, without knowing why, from the presence of Laura, to my own habitation. Upon entering the house, an apartment of which I occupied, I found it totally deserted of its usual inhabitants. The woman and her children were gone to enjoy the freshness of the breeze. The husband was engaged in his usual outdoor occupations. The doors of persons of the lower order in this part of the country, are secured, in the day-time, only with a latch. I entered, and went into the kitchen of the family. Here, as I looked round, my eyes accidentally glanced

upon a paper lying in one corner, which, by some association I was unable to explain, roused in me a strong sensation of suspicion and curiosity. I eagerly went towards it, caught it up, and found it to be the very paper of the WONDERFUL AND SURPRISING HISTORY OF CALEB WILLIAMS, the discovery of which, towards the close of my residence in London, had produced in me such inexpressible anguish.

This encounter at once cleared up all the mystery that hung upon my late transactions. Abhorred and intolerable certainty succeeded to the doubts which had haunted my mind. It struck me with the rapidity of lightning. I felt a sudden torpor and sickness that pervaded every fibre of my frame.

Was there no hope that remained for me? Was acquittal useless? Was there no period, past or in prospect, that could give relief to my sufferings? Was the odious and atrocious falshood that had been in-

vented against me, to follow me wherever I went, to strip me of character, to deprive me of the sympathy and good-will of mankind, to wrest from me the very bread by which life must be sustained?

For the space perhaps of half an hour, the agony I felt from this termination to my tranquillity, and the expectation it excited of the enmity which would follow me through every retreat, was such as to bereave me of all consistent thinking, much more of the power of coming to any resolution. As soon as this giddiness and horror of the mind subsided, and the deadly calm that invaded my faculties was no more, one stiff and master gale gained the ascendancy, and drove me to an instant desertion of this late cherished retreat. I had no patience to enter into further remonstrance and explanation with the inhabitants of my present residence. I believed that it was in vain to hope to recover that favourable prepossession and

tranquillity I had lately enjoyed. In encountering the prejudices that were thus armed against me, I should have to deal with a variety of dispositions, and, though I might succeed with some, I could not expect to succeed with all. I had seen too much of the reign of triumphant falshood, to have that sanguine confidence in the effects of my innocence, which would have suggested itself to the mind of any other person of my propensities and my age. The recent instance which had occurred in my conversation with Laura, might well contribute to discourage me. I could not endure the thought of opposing the venom that was thus scattered against me, in detail and through its minuter particles. If ever it should be necessary to encounter it, if I were pursued like a wild beast, till I could no longer avoid turning upon my hunters, I would then turn upon the true author of this unprincipled attack. I would en-

counter the calumny in its strong hold; I would rouse myself to an exertion hitherto unessayed, and, by the firmness, intrepidity and unalterable constancy I should display, would yet compel mankind to believe Mr. Falkland a suborner and a murderer!

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. XIV.

I HASTEN to the conclusion of my melancholy story. I began to write soon after the period to which I have now conducted it. This was another resource, that my mind, ever eager in inventing means to escape from my misery, suggested. In my haste to withdraw myself from the retreat in Wales, where first the certainty of Mr. Falkland's menaces was confirmed to me, I left behind me the apparatus of my etymological enquiries, and the papers I had written upon the subject. I have never been able to persuade myself to resume this pursuit. It is always discouraging, to begin over again a laborious task, and exert one's self to recover a position we had already

occupied. I knew not how soon or how abruptly I might be driven from any new situation; the appendages of the study in which I had engaged, were too cumbrous for this state of dependence and uncertainty; they only served to give new sharpness to the enmity of my foe, and new poignancy to my hourly-renewing distress.

But what was of greatest importance, and made the deepest impression upon my mind, was my separation from the family of Laura. Fool that I was, to imagine that there was any room for me in the abodes of friendship and tranquillity! It was now first that I felt, with the most intolerable acuteness, how completely I was cut off from the whole human species. Other connections I had gained, comparatively without interest; and I saw them dissolved, without the consummation of agony. I had never experienced the purest refinements of

friendship, but in two instances, that of Collins, and this of the family of Laura. Solitude, separation, banishment! These are words often in the mouths of human beings; but few men, except myself, have felt the full latitude of their meaning. The pride of philosophy has taught us to treat man as an individual. He is no such thing. He holds, necessarily, indispensably, to his species. He is like those twin-births, that have two heads indeed, and four hands; but, if you attempt to detach them from each other, they are inevitably subjected to miserable and lingering destruction.

It was this circumstance, more than all the rest, that gradually gorged my heart with abhorrence of Mr. Falkland. I could not think of his name, but with a sickness and a loathing, that seemed more than human. It was by his means, that I suffered the loss of one consolation after another, of every thing that was

happiness, or that had the resemblance of happiness.

The writing of these memoirs served me as a source of avocation for several years. For some time I had a melancholy satisfaction in it. I was better pleased to retrace the particulars of calamities that had formerly afflicted me, than to look forward, as at other times I was too apt to do, to those by which I might hereafter be overtaken. I conceived that my story faithfully digested, would carry in it an impression of truth that few men would be able to resist; or, at worst, that, by leaving it behind me when I should no longer continue to exist, posterity might be induced to do me justice, and, seeing in my example what sort of evils are entailed upon mankind by society as it is at present constituted, might be inclined to turn their attention upon the fountain from which such bitter waters have been accustomed

to flow. But these motives have diminished in their influence. I have contracted a disgust for life and all its appendages. Writing, which was at first a pleasure, is changed into a burthen. I shall compress into a small compass what remains to be told.

I discovered, not long after the period of which I am speaking, the precise cause of the reverse I had experienced in my residence in Wales, and, included in that cause, what it was I had to look for in my future adventures. Mr. Falkland had taken the infernal Gines into his pay, a man critically qualified for the service in which he was now engaged, by the unfeeling brutality of his temper, by his habits of mind at once audacious and artful, and by the peculiar animosity and vengeance he had conceived against me. The employment to which this man was hired, was that of following me from place to place, blasting my reputation, and pre-

venting me from the chance, by continuing long in one residence, of acquiring a character of integrity, that should give new weight to any accusation I might at a future time be induced to prefer. He had come to the seat of my residence with the bricklayers and labourers I have mentioned; and, while he took care to keep out of sight so far as related to me, was industrious in disseminating that which, in the eye of the world, seemed to amount to a demonstration of the profligacy and detestableness of my character. It was, no doubt, from him that the detested scroll had been procured, which I had found in my habitation immediately prior to my quitting it. In all this Mr. Falkland, reasoning upon his principles, was only employing a necessary precaution. There was something in the temper of his mind, that impressed him with aversion to the idea of violently putting an end to my existence; at the

same time that unfortunately he could never deem himself sufficiently secured against my recrimination, so long as I remained alive. As to the fact of Gines being retained by him for this tremendous purpose, he by no means desired that it should become generally known; but neither did he look upon the possibility of its being known, with terror. It was already too notorious for his wishes, that I had advanced the most odious charges against him. If he regarded me with abhorrence as the adversary of his fame, those persons who had had occasion to be in any degree acquainted with our history, did not entertain less abhorrence against me for my own sake. If they should at any time know the pains he exerted in causing my evil reputation to follow me, they would consider it as an act of impartial justice, perhaps as a generous anxiety to prevent

other men from being imposed upon and injured, as he had been.

What expedient was I to employ for the purpose of counteracting the meditated and barbarous prudence, which was thus destined, in all changes of scene, to deprive me of the benefits and consolations of human society? There was one expedient against which I was absolutely determined, disguise. I had experienced so many mortifications and such intolerable restraint when I formerly had recourse to it, it was associated in my memory with sensations of such acute anguish, that my mind was thus far entirely convinced: life was not worth purchasing at so high a price! But, though in this respect I was wholly resolved, there was another point that did not appear so material, and in which therefore I was willing to accommodate myself to circumstances. I was contented, if that would

insure my peace, to submit to the otherwise unmanly expedient of passing by a different name.

But the change of my name, the abruptness with which I removed from place to place, the remoteness and the obscurity which I proposed to myself in the choice of my abode, were all insufficient to elude the sagacity of Gines, or the unrelenting constancy with which Mr. Falkland incited my tormentor to pursue me. Whithersoever I removed myself, it was not long before I had occasion to perceive this detested adversary in my rear. No words can enable me to do justice to the sensations which this circumstance produced in me. It was like what has been described of the eye of omniscience pursuing the guilty sinner, and darting a ray that awakens him to new sensibility, at the very moment that, otherwise, exhausted nature would lull him into a temporary oblivion of the

reproaches of his conscience. Sleep fled from my eyes. No walls could hide me from the discernment of this hated foe. Every where his industry was unwearied to create for me new distress. Rest I had none: relief I had none: never could I count upon an instant's security: never could I wrap myself in the shroud of oblivion. The minutes in which I did not actually perceive him, were contaminated and blasted with the certain expectation of his speedy interference. In my first retreat I had passed a few weeks of delusive tranquillity, but never after was I happy enough to attain so much as that shadowy gratification. I spent some years in this dreadful vicissitude of pain. My sensations at certain periods amounted to insanity.

I pursued in every succeeding instance the conduct I had adopted at first. I determined never to enter into a contest of accusation and defence with the execrable

Gines. If I could have submitted to it in other respects, what purpose would it answer? I should have but an imperfect and mutilated story to tell. This story had succeeded with persons, already prepossessed in my favour by personal intercourse; but could it succeed with strangers? It had succeeded so long as I was able to hide myself from my pursuers; but could it succeed, now that this appeared impracticable, and that they proceeded by arming against me a whole vicinity at once?

It is inconceivable the mischiefs that this kind of existence included. Why should I insist upon such aggravations as hunger, beggary, and external wretchedness? These were an inevitable consequence. It was by the desertion of mankind that, in each successive instance, I was made acquainted with my fate. Delay in such a moment served but to increase the evil; and, when I fled,

meagreness and penury were the ordinary attendants of my course. But this was a small consideration. Indignation at one time, and unconquerable perseverance at another, sustained me, where humanity, left to itself, would probably have sunk.

It has already appeared that I was not of a temper to endure calamity, without endeavouring, by every means I could devise, to elude and disarm it. Recollecting, as I was habituated to do, the various projects by which my situation could be meliorated, the question occurred to me: Why should I be harassed by the pursuit of this Gines? Why, man to man, may I not, by the powers of my mind, attain the ascendancy over him? At present he appears to be the persecutor, and I the persecuted: is not this difference the mere creature of the imagination? May I not employ my ingenuity to vex him with difficulties, and laugh at

the endless labour to which he will be condemned?

Alas, this is a speculation for a mind at ease! It is not the persecution; but the catastrophe which is annexed to it, that makes the difference between the tyrant and the sufferer! In mere corporal exertion, the hunter perhaps is upon a level with the miserable animal he pursues! But could it be forgotten by either of us, that, at every stage, Gines was to gratify his malignant passions, by disseminating charges of the most infamous nature, and exciting against me the abhorrence of every honest bosom, while I was to sustain the still-repeated annihilation of my peace, my character, and my bread? Could I, by any refinement of reason, convert this dreadful series into sport? I had no philosophy, that qualified me for so extraordinary an effort. If, under other circumstances, I could even have entertained so strange an imagina-

tion, I was restrained in the present instance, by the necessity of providing for myself the means of subsistence, and the fetters which, through that necessity, the forms of human society imposed upon my exertions.

In one of those changes of residence, to which my miserable fate repeatedly compelled me, I met, upon a road which I was obliged to traverse, the friend of my youth, my earliest and best beloved friend, the venerable Collins. It was one of those misfortunes which served to accumulate my distress, that this man had quitted the island of Great Britain only a very few weeks before that fatal reverse of fortune, which had ever since pursued me with unrelenting eagerness. Mr. Falkland, in addition to the large estate he possessed in England, had a very valuable plantation in the West Indies. This property had been greatly mismanaged by the person who had the direction of

it on the spot; and, after various promises and evasions on his part, which, however they might serve to beguile the patience of Mr. Falkland, had been attended with no salutary fruits, it was resolved that Mr. Collins should go over in person, to rectify the abuses which had so long prevailed. There had even been some idea of his residing several years, if not settling finally, upon the plantation. From that hour to the present I had never received the smallest intelligence respecting him.

I had always considered the circumstance of his critical absence, as one of my severest misfortunes. Mr. Collins had been one of the first persons, even in the period of my infancy, to conceive hopes of me, as of something above the common standard; and had contributed, more than any other, to encourage and assist my juvenile studies. He had been the executor of the little property of my fa-

ther, who had fixed upon him for that purpose, in consideration of the mutual affection that existed between us; and I seemed, on every account, to have more claim upon his protection, than upon that of any other human being. I had always believed that, had he been present in the crisis of my fortune, he would have felt a conviction of my innocence; and, convinced himself, would, by means of the venerableness and energy of his character, have interposed so effectually, as to have saved me the greater part of my subsequent misfortunes.

There was yet another idea in my mind relative to this subject, which had more weight with me, than even the substantial exertions of friendship I should have expected from him. The greatest aggravation of my present lot, was, that I was cut off from the friendship of mankind. I can safely affirm, that poverty and hunger, that endless wanderings, that

a blasted character and the curses that clung to my name, were all of them slight misfortunes compared to this. I endeavoured to sustain myself by the sense of my integrity, but the voice of no man upon earth echoed to the voice of my conscience. "I called aloud; but there was none to answer; there was none that regarded." To me the whole world was as unhearing as the tempest, and as cold as the torpedo. Sympathy, the magnetic virtue, the hidden essence of our life, was extinct. Nor was this the sum of my misery. This food, so essential to an intelligent existence, seemed perpetually renewing before me in its fairest colours, only the more effectually to elude my grasp, and to mock my hunger. From time to time I was prompted to unfold the affections of my soul, only to be repelled with the greater anguish, and to be baffled in a way the most intolerably mortifying.

No sight therefore could give me a purer delight, than that which now presented itself to my eyes. It was some time, however, before either of us recognized the person of the other. Ten years had elapsed since our last interview. Mr. Collins looked much older than he had done at that period; in addition to which, he was, in his present appearance, pale, sickly, and thin. These unfavourable effects had been produced by the change of climate, particularly trying to persons in an advanced period of life. Add to which, I supposed him to be at that moment in the West Indies. I was probably as much altered in the period that had elapsed, as he had been. I was the first to recollect him. He was on horseback; I on foot. I had suffered him to pass me. In a moment the full idea of who he was rushed upon my mind; I ran; I called with an impetuous voice; I was

unable to restrain the vehemence of my emotions.

The ardour of my feelings disguised my usual tone of speaking, which otherwise Mr. Collins would infallibly have recognised. His sight was already dim; he pulled up his horse till I should overtake him; and then said, Who are you? I do not know you.

My father! exclaimed I, embracing one of his knees with fervour and delight, I am your son! once your little Caleb, whom you a thousand times loaded with your kindness!

The unexpected repetition of my name gave a kind of shuddering emotion to my friend, which was however checked by his age, and the calm and benevolent philosophy that formed one of his most conspicuous habits.

I did not expect to see you! replied he.—I did not wish it!

My best, my oldest friend! answered

I, respect blending itself with my impatience, Do not say so! I have not a friend any where in the whole world, but you! In you at least let me find sympathy and reciprocal affection! If you knew how anxiously I have thought of you during the whole period of your absence, you would not thus grievously disappoint me in your return!

How is it, said Mr. Collins gravely, that you have been reduced to this forlorn condition? Was it not the inevitable consequence of your own actions?

The actions of others, not mine! Does not your heart tell you that I am innocent?

No. My observation of your early character, taught me that you would be extraordinary. But unhappily all extraordinary men are not good men; that seems to be a lottery, dependent on circumstances apparently the most trivial.

Will you hear my justification? I am

as sure as I am of my existence, that I can convince you of my purity.

Certainly, if you require it, I will hear you. But that must not be just now. I could have been glad to decline it wholly. At my age I am not fit for the storm, and I am not so sanguine as you, in my expectation of the result. Of what would you convince me? That Mr. Falkland is a suborner and a murderer?

I made no answer. My silence was an affirmative to this question.

And what benefit will result from this conviction? I have known you a promising boy, whose character might turn to one side or the other, as events should decide. I have known Mr. Falkland in his maturer years, and have always admired him, as the living model of liberality and goodness. If you could change all my ideas, and show me that there was no criterion by which vice might be prevented from being mistaken for virtue,

what benefit would arise from that? I must part with all my interior consolation, and all my external connections. And for what? What is it you propose? The death of Mr. Falkland by the hands of the hangman.

No. I will not hurt a hair of his head, unless compelled to it by a principle of defence. But surely you owe me justice?

What justice? The justice of proclaiming your innocence? You know what consequences are annexed to that. But I do not believe I shall find you innocent. If you even succeed in perplexing my understanding, you will not succeed in enlightening it. Such is the state of mankind, that innocence, when involved in circumstances of suspicion, can scarcely ever make out a demonstration of its purity, and guilt can often make us feel an insurmountable reluctance to the pronouncing it guilt. Meanwhile, for the purchase of this uncertainty, I

must sacrifice all the remaining comforts of my life. I believe Mr. Falkland to be virtuous; but I know him to be prejudiced. He would never forgive me even this accidental parley, if by any means he should come to be acquainted with it.

Oh, argue not the consequences that are possible to result! answered I impatiently. I have a right to your kindness; I have a right to your assistance!

You have them. You have them to a certain degree; and it is not likely that, by any process of examination, you can have them entire. You know my habits of thinking. I regard you as vicious; but I do not consider the vicious as proper objects of indignation and scorn. I consider you as a machine; you are not constituted, I am afraid, to be greatly useful to your fellow men; but you did not make yourself; you are just what circumstances irresistibly compelled you to be. I am sorry for your ill proper-

ties; but I entertain no enmity against you, nothing but benevolence. Considering you in the light in which I at present consider you, I am ready to contribute every thing in my power to your real advantage, and would gladly assist you, if I knew how, in detecting and extirpating the errors that have misled you. You have disappointed me, but I have no reproaches to utter: it is more necessary for me to feel compassion for you, than that I should accumulate your misfortune by my censures.

What could I say to such a man as this? Amiable, incomparable man! Never was my mind more painfully divided than at that moment. The more he excited my admiration, the more imperiously did my heart command me, whatever were the price it should cost, to extort his friendship. I was persuaded that severe duty required of him, that he should reject all personal considerations,

that he should proceed resolutely to the investigation of the truth, and that, if he found the result terminating in my favour, he should resign all his advantages, and, deserted as I was by the world, make a common cause, and endeavour to compensate the general injustice. But was it for me to force this conduct upon him, if, now in his declining years, his own fortitude shrunk from it? Alas, neither he nor I foresaw the dreadful catastrophe that was so closely impending! Otherwise, I am well assured, that no tenderness for his remaining tranquillity would have withheld him from a compliance with my wishes! On the other hand, could I pretend to know what evils might result to him from his declaring himself my advocate? Might not his integrity be brow-beaten and defeated as mine had been? Did the imbecility of his grey hairs afford no advantage to my terrible adversary in the contest? Might

not Mr. Falkland reduce him to a condition as wretched and low as mine? After all, was it not vice in me to desire to involve another man in my sufferings? If I regarded them as intolerable, this was still an additional reason why I should bear them alone.

Influenced by these considerations, I assented to his views. I assented to be thought hardly of by the man in the world whose esteem I most ardently desired, rather than involve him in possible calamity. I assented to the resigning what appeared to me, at that moment, as the last practicable comfort of my life, a comfort, upon the thought of which, while I surrendered it, my mind dwelt with undescribable longings. Mr. Collins was deeply affected with the apparent ingenuousness with which I expressed my feelings. The secret struggle of his mind was, Can this be hypocrisy? The individual with whom I am conferring,

if virtuous, is one of the most disinterestedly virtuous persons in the world. We tore ourselves from each other. Mr. Collins promised, as far as he was able, to have an eye upon my vicissitudes, and to assist me, in every respect, that was consistent with a just recollection of consequences. Thus I parted as it were with the last expiring hope of my mind; and voluntarily consented, thus maimed and forlorn, to encounter all the evils that were yet in store for me.

This is the latest event, which at present I think it necessary to record. I shall doubtless hereafter have further occasion to take up the pen. Great and unprecedented as my sufferings have been, I feel intimately persuaded that there are worse sufferings that await me. What mysterious cause is it, that enables me to write this, and not to perish under the horrible apprehension!

CHAP. XV.

It is as I foreboded. The presage with which I was visited was prophetic. I am now to record a new and terrible revolution of my fortune and my mind.

Having made experiment of various situations with one uniform result, I at length determined to remove myself, if possible, from the reach of my persecutor, by going into voluntary banishment from my native soil. This was my last resource for tranquillity, for honest fame, for those privileges to which human life is indebted for the whole of its value. In some distant climate, said I, surely I may find that security which is necessary to persevering pursuit; surely I may lift my head erect, associate with men upon

the footing of a man, acquire connections, and preserve them! It is inconceivable, with what ardent reachings of the soul I aspired to this termination.

This last consolation was denied me by the inexorable Falkland.

At the time the project was formed, I was at no great distance from the east coast of the island, and I resolved to take ship at Harwich, and pass immediately into Holland. I accordingly repaired to that place, and went, almost as soon as I arrived, to the port. But there was no vessel perfectly ready to sail. I left the port, and withdrew to an inn, where, after some time, I retired to a chamber. I was scarcely there, before the door of the room was opened, and the man whose countenance was the most hateful to my eyes, Gines, entered the apartment. He shut the door as soon as he entered.

Youngster, said he, I have a little pri-

vate intelligence to communicate to you. I come as a friend, and that I may save you a labour-in-vain trouble. If you consider what I have to say in that light, it will be the better for you. It is my business now, do you see, for want of a better, to see that you do not break out of bounds. Not that I much matter having one man for my employer, or dancing attendance after another's heels; but I have special kindness for you, for some good turns that you wot of, and therefore I do not stand upon ceremonies! You have led me a very pretty round already; and, out of the love I bear you, you shall lead me as much further, if you will. But beware the salt seas! They are out of my orders. You are a prisoner at present, and I believe all your life will remain so. Thanks to the milk-and-water softness of your former master! If I had the ordering of these things, it should go with you in another

fashion. As long as you think proper, you are a prisoner within the rules; and the rules with which the soft-hearted squire indulges you, are all England, Scotland and Wales. But you are not to go out of these climates. The squire is determined you shall never pass the reach of his disposal. He has therefore given orders that, whenever you attempt so to do, you shall be converted, from a prisoner at large, to a prisoner in good earnest. A friend of mine followed you just now to the harbour; I was within call; and, if there had been any appearance of your setting your foot from land, we should have been with you in a trice, and laid you fast by the heels. I would advise you for the future, to keep at a proper distance from the sea, for fear of the worst. You see I tell you all this for your good. For my part I should be better satisfied, if you were in limbo, with a rope about your neck, and a com-

fortable bird's eye prospect to the gallows: but I do as I am directed; and so good night to you!

The intelligence thus conveyed to me, occasioned an instantaneous revolution in both my intellectual and animal system. I disdained to answer, or take the smallest notice of, the fiend by whom it was delivered. It is now three days since I received it, and, from that moment to the present, my blood has been in a perpetual ferment. My thoughts wander from one idea of horror to another, with incredible rapidity. I have had no sleep. I have scarcely remained in one posture for a minute together. It has been with the utmost difficulty, that I have been able to command myself, far enough to add a few pages to my story. But, uncertain as I am of the events of each succeeding hour, I determined to force myself to the performance of this task. All is not right within me. How it will

terminate God knows. I sometimes fear that I shall be wholly deserted of my reason.

What—dark, mysterious, unfeeling, unrelenting tyrant!—is it come to this?—When Nero and Caligula swayed the Roman sceptre, it was a fearful thing to offend these bloody rulers. The empire had already spread itself from climate to climate, and from sea to sea. If their unhappy victim fled to the rising of the sun, where the luminary of day seems to us first to ascend from the waves of the ocean, the power of the tyrant was still behind him. If he withdrew to the west, to Hesperian darkness, and the shores of barbarian Thule, still he was not safe from his gore-drenched foe.—Falkland! art thou the offspring in whom the lineaments of these tyrants are faithfully preserved? Was the world, with all its climates, made

in vain for thy helpless, unoffending victim?

Tremble!

Tyrants have trembled surrounded with whole armies of their Janissaries! What should make thee inaccessible to my fury?—No, I will use no daggers! I will unfold a tale—! I will show thee for what thou art to the world; and all the men that live shall confess my truth! —Didst thou imagine that I was altogether passive, a mere worm, organized to feel sensations of pain, but no emotion of resentment? Didst thou imagine that there was no danger in inflicting on me pains however great, miseries however dreadful? Didst thou believe me impotent, imbecil and idiot-like, with no understanding to contrive thy ruin, and no energy to perpetrate it?

I will tell a tale—! The justice of the country shall hear me! The elements of

nature in universal uproar shall not interrupt me! I will speak with a voice more fearful than thunder!—Why should I be supposed to speak from any dishonourable motive? I am under no prosecution now! I shall not now appear to be endeavouring to remove a criminal indictment from myself, by throwing it back on its author!—Shall I regret the ruin that will overwhelm thee! Too long have I been tender-hearted and forbearing! What benefit has ever resulted from my mistaken clemency? There is no evil thou hast scrupled to accumulate upon me! Neither will I be more scrupulous! Thou hast shown no mercy; and thou shalt receive none!—I must be calm! Bold as a lion, yet collected!

This is a moment pregnant with fate. I know—I think I know—that I will be triumphant, and crush my seemingly omnipotent foe. But, should it be otherwise, at least he shall not be every way

successful. His fame shall not be immortal as he thinks. These papers shall preserve the truth: they shall one day be published, and then the world shall do justice on us both. Recollecting that, I shall not die wholly without consolation. It is not to be endured that falshood and tyranny should reign for ever.

How impotent are the precautions of man against the eternally existing laws of the intellectual world? This Falkland has invented against me every species of foul accusation. He has hunted me from city to city. He has drawn his lines of circumvallation round me that I may not escape. He has kept his scenters of human prey for ever at my heels. He may hunt me out of the world.—In vain! With this engine, this little pen I defeat all his machinations; I stab him in the very point he was most solicitous to defend!

Collins! I now address myself to you.

I have consented that you should yield me no assistance in my present terrible situation. I am content to die, rather than do any thing injurious to your tranquillity.—But remember, you are my father still! I conjure you, by all the love you ever bore me, by the benefits you have conferred on me, by the forbearance and kindness towards you that now penetrates my soul, by my innocence—for, if these be the last words I shall ever write, I die protesting my innocence!—by all these, or whatever tie more sacred has influence on your soul, I conjure you, listen to my last request! Preserve these papers from destruction, and preserve them from Falkland! It is all I ask! I have taken care to provide a safe mode of conveying them into your possession! and I have a firm confidence, which I will not suffer to depart from me, that they will one day find their way to the public!

The pen lingers in my trembling fingers! Is there any thing I have left unsaid?—The contents of the fatal trunk from which all my misfortunes originated, I have never been able to ascertain. I once thought it contained some murderous instrument or relique, connected with the fate of the unhappy Tyrrel. I am now persuaded that the secret it incloses, is a faithful narrative of that and its concomitant transactions, written by Mr. Falkland, and reserved in case of the worst, that, if, by any unforeseen event, his guilt should come to be fully disclosed, it might contribute to redeem the wreck of his reputation. But the truth or the falshood of this conjecture, is of little moment. If Falkland shall never be detected to the satisfaction of the world, such a narrative will probably never see the light. In that case this story of mine may amply, severely perhaps, supply its place.

I know not what it is that renders me thus solemn. I have a secret foreboding, as if I should never again be master of myself. If I succeed in what I now meditate respecting Falkland, my precaution in the disposal of these papers will have been unnecessary; I shall no longer be reduced to artifice and evasion. If I fail, the precaution will appear to have been wisely chosen.

POSTSCRIPT.

All is over. I have carried into execution my meditated attempt. My situation is totally changed; I now sit down to give an account of it. For several weeks after the completion of this dreadful business, my mind was in too tumultuous a state to permit me to write. I think I shall now be able to arrange my thoughts sufficiently for that purpose. Great God! how wondrous, how terrible, are the events that have intervened, since I was last employed in a similar manner! It is no wonder that my thoughts were solemn, and my mind filled with horrible forebodings!

Having formed my resolution, I set out from Harwich, for the metropolitan town

of the county in which Mr. Falkland resided. Gines, I well knew, was in my rear. That was of no consequence to me. He might wonder at the direction I pursued, but he could not tell with what purpose I pursued it. My design was a secret, carefully locked up in my own breast. It was not without a sentiment of terror, that I entered a town which had been the scene of my long imprisonment. I proceeded to the house of the chief magistrate, the instant I arrived, that I might give no time to my adversary to counterwork my proceeding.

I told him who I was, and that I was come from a distant part of the kingdom, for the purpose of rendering him the medium of a charge of murder against my former patron. My name was already familiar to him. He answered, that he could not take cognizance of my deposition, that I was an object of universal execration in that part of the world, and

he was determined, upon no account, to be the vehicle of my depravity.

I warned him to consider well what he was doing. I called upon him for no favour; I only applied to him in the regular exercise of his function. Would he take upon him to say, that he had a right, at his pleasure, to suppress a charge of this complicated nature? I had to accuse Mr. Falkland of repeated murders. The perpetrator knew that I was in possession of the truth upon the subject; and, knowing that, I went perpetually in danger of my life from his malice and revenge. I was resolved to go through with the business, if justice were to be obtained from any court in England. Upon what pretence did he refuse my deposition? I was in every respect a competent witness. I was of age to understand the nature of an oath; I was in my perfect senses; I was untarnished by the verdict of any jury, or the sentence of any judge. His

private opinion of my character could not alter the law of the land. I demanded to be confronted with Mr. Falkland, and I was well assured I should substantiate the charge, to the satisfaction of the whole world. If he did not think proper to apprehend him upon my single testimony, I should be satisfied, if he only sent him notice of the charge, and summoned him to appear.

The magistrate, finding me thus resolute, thought proper a little to lower his tone. He no longer absolutely refused to comply with my requisition, but condescended to expostulate with me. He represented to me Mr. Falkland's health, which had for some years been exceedingly indifferent, his having been once already brought to the most solemn examination upon this charge, the diabolical malice in which alone my proceeding must have originated, and the tenfold ruin it would bring down upon my head.

To all these representations my answer was short. "I was determined to go on, and would abide the consequences." A summons was at length granted, and notice sent to Mr. Falkland of the charge preferred against him.

Three days elapsed, before any further step could be taken in this business. This interval in no degree contributed to tranquillise my mind. The thought of preferring a capital accusation against, and hastening the death of, such a man as Mr. Falkland, was by no means an opiate to reflection. At one time I commended the action, either as just revenge (for the benevolence of my nature was, in a great degree, turned to gall), or as necessary self-defence, or as that which, in an impartial and philanthropical estimate, included the smallest evil. At another time I was haunted with doubts. But, in spite of these variations of sentiment, I uniformly determined to persist! I felt

as if impelled by a tide of unconquerable impulse. The consequences were such, as might well appal the stoutest heart. Either the ignominious execution of a man, whom I had once so deeply venerated, and whom now I sometimes suspected not to be without his claims to veneration; or a confirmation, perhaps an increase, of the calamities I had so long endured. Yet these I preferred to a state of uncertainty. I desired to know the worst; to put an end to the hope, however faint, which had been so long my torment; and, above all, to exhaust and finish the catalogue of expedients that were at my disposition. My mind was worked up to a state little short of frenzy. My body was in a burning fever with the agitation of my thoughts. When I laid my hand upon my bosom or my head, it seemed to scorch them with the fervency of its heat. I could not sit still for a moment. I panted with

incessant desire, that the dreadful crisis I had so eagerly invoked, were come, and were over.

After an interval of three days, I met Mr. Falkland, in the presence of the magistrate to whom I had applied upon the subject. I had only two hours notice to prepare myself; Mr. Falkland seeming as eager as I, to have the question brought to a crisis, and laid at rest for ever. I had an opportunity before the examination, to learn, that Mr. Forester was drawn by some business, on an excursion on the continent; and that Collins, whose health, when I saw him, was in a very precarious state, was at this time confined with an alarming illness. His constitution had been wholly broken by his West Indian expedition. The audience I met at the house of the magistrate, consisted of several gentlemen and others selected for the purpose; the plan being, in some respects as in the former

instance, to find a medium between the suspicious air of a private examination, and the indelicacy, as it was styled, of an examination exposed to the remark of every casual spectator.

I can conceive of no shock, greater than that I received from the sight of Mr. Falkland. His appearance, on the last occasion on which we met, had been haggard, ghost-like and wild, energy in his gestures, and frenzy in his aspect. It was now the appearance of a corpse. He was brought in in a chair, unable to stand, fatigued and almost destroyed by the journey he had just taken. His visage was colourless; his limbs destitute of motion, almost of life. His head reclined upon his bosom, except that now and then he lifted it up, and opened his eyes with a languid glance; immediately after which he sunk back into his former apparent insensibility. He seemed not to have three hours to live.

He had kept his chamber for several weeks; but the summons of the magistrate had been delivered to him at his bed-side; his orders respecting letters and written papers being so peremptory, that no one dared to disobey them. Upon reading the paper, he was seized with a very dangerous fit; but, as soon as he recovered, he insisted upon being conveyed, with all practicable expedition, to the place of appointment. Falkland, in the most helpless state, was still Falkland, firm in command, and capable to extort obedience from every one that approached him.

What a sight was this to me! Till the moment that Falkland was presented to my view, my breast was steeled to pity. I thought that I had coolly entered into the reason of the case (passion, in a state of solemn and omnipotent vehemence, always appears to be coolness to him in whom it domineers); and that I

had determined impartially and justly. I believed that, if Mr. Falkland were permitted to persist in his schemes, we must both of us be completely wretched. I believed that it was in my power, by the resolution I had formed, to throw my share of this wretchedness from me, and that his could scarcely be increased. It appeared therefore to my mind, to be a mere piece of equity and justice, such as an impartial spectator would desire, that one person should be miserable in preference to two, that one person, rather than two, should be incapacitated from acting his part, and contributing his share to the general welfare. I thought that, in this business, I had risen superior to personal considerations, and judged with a total neglect of the suggestions of self-regard. It is true Mr. Falkland was mortal: but, notwithstanding his apparent decay, he might live long. Ought I to submit, to waste the best years of

my life in my present wretched situation? He had declared that his reputation should be for ever inviolate; this was his ruling passion, the thought that worked his soul to madness. He would probably therefore leave a legacy of persecution to be received by me, from the hands of Gines, or some other villain equally atrocious, when he should himself be no more. Now, or never, was the time for me to redeem my future life from endless woe.

But all these fine-spun reasonings vanished, before the object that was now presented to me. "Shall I trample upon a man thus dreadfully reduced? Shall I point my animosity against one, whom the system of nature has brought down to the grave? Shall I poison, with sounds the most intolerable to his ears, the last moments of a man like Falkland? It is impossible. There must have been some dreadful mistake in the train of argu-

ment, that persuaded me to be the author of this hateful scene. There must have been a better and more magnanimous remedy to the evils under which I groaned."

It was too late. The mistake I had committed, was now gone past all power of recal. Here was Falkland, solemnly brought before a magistrate to answer to a charge of murder. Here I stood, having already declared myself the author of the charge, gravely and sacredly pledged to support it. This was my situation; and, thus situated, I was called upon immediately to act. My whole frame shook. I would eagerly have consented, that that moment should have been the last of my existence. I however believed, that the conduct now most indispensibly incumbent on me, was to lay the emotions of my soul naked before my hearers. I looked first at Mr. Falkland, and then

at the magistrate and attendants, and then at Mr. Falkland again. My voice was suffocated with agony. I began:

Why cannot I recal the four last days of my life? How was it possible for me to be so eager, so obstinate, in a purpose so diabolical? Oh, that I had listened to the expostulations of the magistrate that hears me, or submitted to the well-meant despotism of his authority! Hitherto I have only been miserable; henceforth I shall account myself base! Hitherto, though hardly treated by mankind, I stood acquitted at the bar of my own conscience. I had not filled up the measure of my wretchedness!

Would to God it were possible for me, to retire from this scene without uttering another word! I would brave the consequences—I would submit to any imputation of cowardice, falsehood, and profligacy, rather than add to the weight

of misfortune with which Mr. Falkland is overwhelmed. But the situation and the demands of Mr. Falkland himself, forbid me. He, in compassion for whose fallen state I would willingly forget every interest of my own, would compel me to accuse, that he might enter upon his justification.—I will confess every sentiment of my heart.

No penitence, no anguish, can expiate the folly and the cruelty of this last act I have perpetrated. But Mr. Falkland well knows—I affirm it in his presence—how unwillingly I have proceeded to this extremity. I have reverenced him; he was worthy of reverence: I have loved him; he was endowed with qualities that partook of divine.

From the first moment I saw him, I conceived the most ardent admiration. He condescended to encourage me; I attached myself to him with the fulness

of affection. He was unhappy; I exerted myself with youthful curiosity to discover the secret of his woe. This was the beginning of misfortune.

What shall I say?—He was indeed the murderer of Tyrrel; he suffered the Hawkinses to be executed, knowing that they were innocent, and that he alone was guilty. After successive surmises, after various indiscretions on my part, and indications on his, he at length confided to me at full the fatal tale!

Mr. Falkland! I most solemnly conjure you to recollect yourself! Did I ever prove myself unworthy of your confidence? The secret was a most painful burthen to me; it was the extremest folly, that led me unthinkingly to gain possession of it; but I would have died a thousand deaths, rather than betray it. It was the jealousy of your own thoughts, and the weight that hung upon your

mind, that led you to watch my motions, and conceive alarm from every particle of my conduct.

You began in confidence; why did you not continue in confidence? The evil that resulted from my original imprudence, would then have been comparatively little. You threatened me: did I then betray you? A word from my lips at that time, would have freed me from your threats for ever. I bore them for a considerable period, and at last quitted your service, and threw myself a fugitive upon the world, in silence. Why did you not suffer me to depart? You brought me back by stratagem and violence, and wantonly accused me of an enormous felony! did I then mention a syllable of the murder, the secret of which was in my possession.

Where is the man that has suffered more from the injustice of society, than I have done? I was accused of a villainy

that my heart abhorred. I was sent to jail. I will not enumerate the horrors of my prison, the lightest of which would make the heart of humanity shudder. I looked forward to the gallows! Young, ambitious, fond of life, innocent as the child unborn, I looked forward to the gallows! I believed that one word of resolute accusation against my patron would deliver me; yet I was silent, I armed myself with patience, uncertain whether it were better to accuse or to die. Did this shew me a man unworthy to be trusted?

I determined to break out of prison. With infinite difficulty, and repeated miscarriages, I at length effected my purpose. Instantly a proclamation, with a hundred guineas reward, was issued for apprehending me. I was obliged to take shelter among the refuse of mankind, in the midst of a gang of thieves. I encountered the most imminent peril of my life, when I entered this retreat, and when I

quitted it. Immediately after, I travelled almost the whole length of the kingdom, in poverty and distress, in hourly danger of being retaken and manacled like a felon. I would have fled my country; I was prevented. I had recourse to various disguises; I was innocent, and yet was compelled to as many arts and subterfuges, as could have been entailed on the worst of villains. In London I was as much harassed and as repeatedly alarmed, as I had been in my flight through the country. Did all these persecutions persuade me to put an end to my silence? No: I suffered them with patience and submission; I did not make one attempt to retort them upon their author.

I fell, at last, into the hands of the miscreants that are nourished with human blood. In this terrible situation I, for the first time, attempted, by turning informer, to throw the weight from my-

self. Happily for me, the London magistrate listened to my tale with insolent contempt.

I soon, and long, repented of my rashness, and rejoiced in my miscarriage.

I acknowledge that, in various ways, Mr. Falkland shewed humanity towards me during this period. He would have prevented my going to prison at first; he contributed to my subsistence during my detention; he had no share in the pursuit that had been set on foot against me; he at length procured my discharge, when brought forward for trial. But a great part of his forbearance was unknown to me; I supposed him to be my unrelenting pursuer. I could uot forget that, whoever heaped calamities on me in the sequel, they all originated in his forged accusation.

The prosecution against me for felony was now at end. Why were not my sufferings permitted to terminate then,

and I allowed to hide my weary head in some obscure, yet tranquil retreat? Had I not sufficiently proved my constancy and fidelity? Would not a compromise in this situation have been most wise and most secure? But the restless and jealous anxiety of Mr. Falkland, would not permit him to repose the least atom of confidence. The only compromise that he proposed, was that, with my own hand, I should sign myself a villain. I refused this proposal, and have ever since been driven from place to place, deprived of peace, of honest fame, even of bread. For a long time I persisted in the resolution that no emergency should convert me into the assailant. In evil hour, I at last listened to my resentment and impatience, and the hateful mistake into which I fell, has produced the present scene.

I now see that mistake in all its enormity. I am sure that, if I had opened

my heart to Mr. Falkland, if I had told to him privately the tale that I have now been telling, he could not have resisted my reasonable demand. After all his precautions, he must ultimately have depended upon my forbearance. Could he be sure that, if I were at last worked up to disclose every thing I knew, and to inforce it with all the energy I could exert, I should obtain no credit? If he must in every case be at my mercy, in which mode ought he to have sought his safety, in conciliation, or in inexorable cruelty?

Mr. Falkland is of a noble nature. Yes; in spite of the catastrophe of Tyrrel, of the miserable end of the Hawkinses, and of all that I have myself suffered, I affirm that he has qualities of the most admirable kind. It is therefore impossible that he could have resisted a frank and fervent expostulation, the frankness and the fervour in which the

whole soul was poured out. I despaired, while it was yet time to have made the just experiment; but my despair was criminal, was treason against the sovereignty of truth.

I have told a plain and unadulterated tale. I came hither to curse, but I remain to bless. I came to accuse, but am compelled to applaud. I proclaim to all the world, that Mr. Falkland is a man worthy of affection and kindness, and that I am myself the basest and most odious of mankind! Never will I forgive myself the iniquity of this day. The memory will always haunt me, and embitter every hour of my existence. In thus acting I have been a murderer, a cool, deliberate, unfeeling murderer.—I have said what my accursed precipitation has obliged me to say. Do with me as you please! I ask no favour. Death would be a kindness, compared to what I feel!

Such were the accents dictated by my remorse. I poured them out with uncontrolable impetuosity, for my heart was pierced, and I was compelled to give vent to its anguish. Every one that heard me, was petrified with astonishment. Every one that heard me, was melted into tears. They could not resist the ardour with which I praised the great qualities of Falkland; they manifested their sympathy in the tokens of my penitence.

How shall I describe the feelings of this unfortunate man? Before I began, he seemed sunk and debilitated, incapable of any strenuous impression. When I mentioned the murder, I could perceive in him an involuntary shuddering, though it was counteracted, partly by the feebleness of his frame, and partly by the energy of his mind. This was an allegation he expected, and he had endeavoured to prepare himself for it.

But there was much of what I said, of which he had had no previous conception. When I expressed the anguish of my mind, he seemed at first startled and alarmed, lest this should be a new expedient to gain credit to my tale. His indignation against me was great, for having retained all my resentment towards him, thus, as it might be, in the last hour of his existence. It was increased, when he discovered me, as he supposed, using a pretence of liberality and sentiment, to give new edge to my hostility. But, as I went on, he could no longer resist. He saw my sincerity; he was penetrated with my grief and compunction. He rose from his seat supported by the attendants, and—to my infinite astonishment—threw himself into my arms!

Williams, said he, you have conquered! I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind. I confess, that it is to

my fault and not yours, that it is to the excess of jealousy that was ever burning in my bosom, that I owe my ruin. I could have resisted any plan of malicious accusation you might have brought against me. But I see that the artless and manly story you have told, has carried conviction to every hearer. All my prospects are concluded. All that I most ardently desired, is for ever frustrated. I have spent a life of the basest cruelty, to cover one act of momentary vice, and to protect myself against the prejudices of my species. I stand now completely detected. My name will be consecrated to infamy, while your heroism, your patience, and your virtues, will be for ever admired. You have inflicted on me the most fatal of all mischiefs; but I bless the hand that wounds me. And now,—turning to the magistrate—and now, do with me as you please. I am prepared to suffer all the vengeance of the law.

You cannot inflict on me more than I deserve. You cannot hate me, more than I hate myself. I am the most execrable of all villains. I have for many years (I know not how long) dragged on a miserable existence in insupportable pain. I am at last, in recompense for all my labours and my crimes, dismissed from it, with the disappointment of my only remaining hope, the destruction of that for the sake of which alone I consented to exist. It was worthy of such a life, that it should continue just long enough to witness this final overthrow. If however you wish to punish me, you must be speedy in your justice; for, as reputation was the blood that warmed my heart, so I feel that death and infamy must seize me together.

I record the praises bestowed on me by Falkland, not because I deserve them, but because they serve to aggravate the baseness of my cruelty. He survived this

dreadful scene but three days. I have been his murderer. It was fit that he should praise my patience, who has fallen a victim, life and fame, to my precipitation! It would have been merciful in comparison, if I had planted a dagger in his heart. He would have thanked me for my kindness. But, atrocious, execrable wretch that I have been! I wantonly inflicted on him an anguish a thousand times worse than death. Meanwhile I endure the penalty of my crime. His figure is ever in imagination before me. Waking or sleeping I still behold him. He seems mildly to expostulate with me for my unfeeling behaviour. I live the devoted victim of conscious reproach. Alas! I am the same Caleb Williams that, so short a time ago, boasted that, however great were the calamities I endured, I was still innocent.

Such has been the result of a project I formed, for delivering myself from the

evils that had so long attended me. I thought that, if Falkland were dead, I should return once again to all that makes life worth possessing. I thought that, if the guilt of Falkland were established, fortune and the world would smile upon my efforts. Both these events are accomplished; and it is now only that I am truly miserable.

Why should my reflections perpetually centre upon myself? self, an overweening regard to which has been the source of my errors! Falkland, I will think only of thee, and from that thought, will draw ever-fresh nourishment for my sorrows! One generous, one disinterested tear I will consecrate to thy ashes! A nobler spirit lived not among the sons of men. Thy intellectual powers were truly sublime, and thy bosom burned with a godlike ambition. But of what use are talents and sentiments, in the corrupt wilderness of human society? It is a rank and rot-

ten soil, from which every finer shrub draws poison as it grows. All that, in a happier field and a purer air, would expand into virtue and germinate into usefulness, is thus converted into henbane and deadly nightshade.

Falkland! thou enteredst upon thy career with the purest and most laudable intentions. But thou imbibedst the poison of chivalry with thy earliest youth; and the base and low-minded envy that met thee on thy return to thy native seats, operated with this poison to hurry thee into madness. Soon, too soon, by this fatal coincidence, were the blooming hopes of thy youth blasted for ever! From that moment, thou only continuedst to live to the phantom of departed honour. From that moment, thy benevolence was, in a great part, turned into rankling jealousy and inexorable precaution. Year after year didst thou spend in this miserable project of imposture;

and only at last continuedst to live long enough, to see, by my misjudging and abhorred intervention, thy closing hope disappointed, and thy death accompanied with the foulest disgrace!

I began these memoirs with the idea of vindicating my character. I have now no character that I wish to vindicate: but I will finish them that thy story may be fully understood; and that, if those errors of thy life be known, which thou so ardently desiredst to conceal, the world may at least not hear and repeat a half-told and mangled tale.

THE END.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

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